Week ending December 3 1949 369 V Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull

WILFRED PICKLES FACES A BIG DECISION

Page 19

THE TORY HOPEFULS
by VIRGINIA COWLES

HITCHCOCK—FILM GIANT
by IAN COSTER

EXPECTANT FATHER—FIFTH TIME
by JOHN MAY

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EDITORIAL

Why don't we defend the beauty of Britain?

BECAUSE OF THE economic crisis the National Parks plan, though approved by Parliament, is still-born. There will not be enough money to spare, says the Government, to go ahead with the parks yet.

Well, it depends on what you mean by going ahead. It takes two things to make a National Park, where all who seek health in the clean air of a beautiful countryside can enjoy themselves. One is to make sure that nothing is built to spoil the beauty of the district you have chosen. The other is to clear away eyesores left by past generations.

If the nation is now too poor to clear up its parks—which are "designated" by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill—it can at least prevent any fresh desecration of the scenery.

Such trimmings as new roads, hostels, park-wardens, and so forth can wait until more prosperous days. But there is no excuse, especially at a time when town workers are being called upon to work harder than ever to achieve higher production, for robbing them of what will one day be their parks.

Not only is the long overdue Parks project shelved, but no effective strong line is being taken to save the park lands for the day when they can be fully preserved as beauty spots.

This should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. So far, that Ministry has lived up only to the first part of its name. It plans new towns and replans old ones assiduously, but it seems to care very little about the amenities of country planning.

The Minister, Mr. Lewis Silkin, has over and over again failed to put his foot down to prevent other Government Departments or their agencies from destroying lovely scenery and denying public access to it.

FOR example, the hydro-electric scheme in Snowdonia threatens to turn the Nant Ffrancon Valley, one of the finest prospects in North Wales, into a reservoir, drowning many farms, dwarfing the height of the surrounding mountains, and altering the character of ten miles of lovely country. Around Snowdon no fewer than seven power stations are to be built, and the gem of all Welsh scenery, the Aberglaslyn Pass, is to be sacrificed.

No one, in view of our economic difficulties and the nation's need for more electric power, would be justified in condemning the whole scheme. But what may be good engineering is often very bad country planning, and the Minister is failing in his duty if he allows it to go through without a battle. He should establish the principle that other things besides electricity must be taken into account.

Has he considered that the scheme might well be transferred to some other part of Wales, which contains many hundred square miles of mountain country without the special and unique beauty of Snowdonia?

Not only in the proposed parks is there evidence of a lack of ministerial alertness and courage. Even more alarming is the Minister's attitude to the quarrying which now eats away the hills forming a glorious natural setting to Wells Cathedral in Somerset. A fervent national campaign has represented to Mr. Silkin that this quarrying constitutes desecration of an important part of our heritage. He retorts that his officials have investigated, that he himself has not time to inspect every disputed place, and that he sees no reason to restrict quarrying.

Whatever the rights or wrongs of this case—and nobody who ever visited Wells has any doubts about them—Mr. Silkin's attitude is the wrong one for a planning minister.

THE weak and ineffective policy of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning is shown up in a poor light by the achievements of a respected voluntary body, the National Trust.

This body—in spite of a name which nowadays causes it to be confused with a State organization—is unofficial and depends on gifts and legacies.

It has done more to preserve historic places and first-class scenery than all the governments of the last hundred years. It now manages on behalf of the public a total of 150,000 acres, mostly in scenic areas such as the Lake District, but elsewhere including scores of priceless buildings, from prehistoric Avebury Ring to Bodiam Castle and Knowle House.

Like most deserving causes, the National Trust is feeling the pinch of the economic crisis. It is appealing for more money, and cannot accept new properties unless these are accompanied by funds to keep them up.

But by hook or by crook the National Trust is preserving that part of the national heritage which has come into its hands.

The Minister of Town and Country Planning, if he studies its methods and principles, should find much encouragement to stiffen his own hitherto feeble defence of the people's heritage.

Let him make an impressive start by rescuing Snowdon and Wells. There is and must always be room, even in this small island, both for exploitation of its natural wealth and for enjoyment of its natural beauty.

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1
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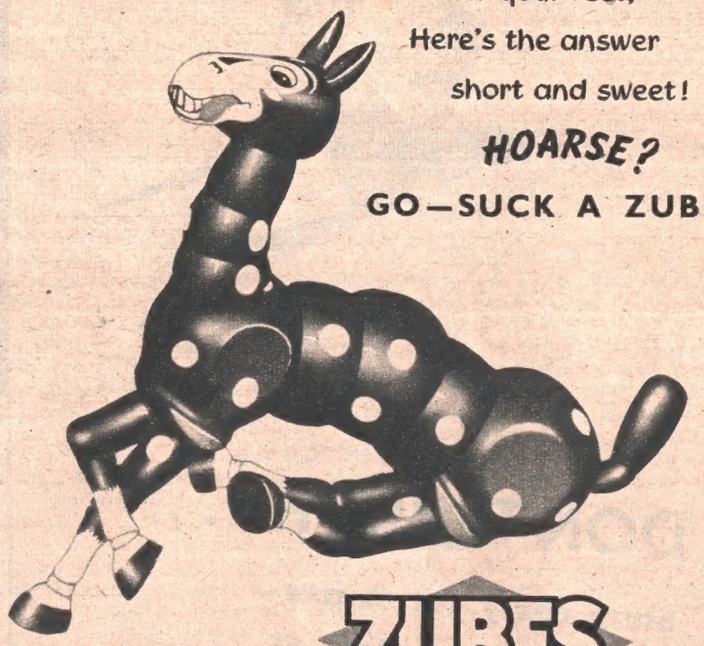

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Free Speech

SPEEDING UP BUILDING

HOW CAN WE GET more houses built? Well, I am a bricklayer, aged twenty-six, and I work with three other men, all more than thirty years older. I find that, even when going at a moderate pace, I am too fast for them and am often told to slow down to a rate which would be hardly a hundred bricks a day.

I blame the employers. Why not put younger men on houses and flats and the older men on less important work. Then both could go at their own pace. —BRICKLAYER, Berks.

News From Russia

IAN BEVAN'S ARTICLE, "Thirty Thousand Silent Cities" (JOHN BULL, November 5), mentions the lack of information regarding war graves in Russia. I can supply some. During 1943 I was able to visit the British cemetery at Archangel. It borders a Russian cemetery

and I found it in relatively good condition, considering the extreme climate. All the headstones were upright, with the inscriptions on them quite legible, and the surrounding wall was intact, as is shown by this photograph which I took at the time.—D. W., Glamorgan.

Britain Moving West?

YOUR EDITORIAL ABOUT sea erosion of the eastern shores of Britain (JOHN BULL, November 12) interested me, because where I live on the west coast the sea is slowly leaving the beaches high and dry. You refer to thousands of acres beneath the North Sea, but here are great areas that could be claimed from the sea for building towns and for farmland.

Southport was built on the beach, but now the sea rarely touches the promenade. Wide stretches of the Dee estuary and the Mersey are covered only at high tide. If sea walls were built, the coastline could be extended by many square miles.—THOMAS LEA, 5, Mannering Road, Liverpool.

Price Of A Cuppa

AS A CATERER WITH thirty years' experience, it seems to me that "A. G. S." did not know all the facts when he complained that his canteen had raised the price of a cup of tea from a penny to three-halfpence ("Free Speech," November 12). Government allocations of tea and sugar, which he quoted, are for every 280 *hot beverages* sold, including coffee and other hot drinks. It is not possible to make 280 cups of tea from these quantities.

The cost of tea, sugar and milk for 280 cups is 12s. 11d. Wages and insurance would be at least 16s. Heating, laundry and loss by breakage averages another 3s. 6d. At three-halfpence a cup, this leaves a balance of 2s. 7d. to cover rent, lighting and various incidentals. — JOHN KIRBY, 21 Divinity Road, Oxford.

A Lead From Page Three

MY SOCIAL CONSCIENCE has developed through reading JOHN BULL editorials, such as "A Reply To The Man Who Wants More Money" (October 29), "Evils Of The Boom In Child Adoption" (November 5) and "Is Your M.P. Good At His Job?" (September 10). Through these and others, I have acquired a sound knowledge of everyday affairs, normally outside my own sphere.—L. REILLY, 77 Longfield Avenue, Enfield, Middx.

Charity Out Of Date

UNDER THE TERMS of an old will, food and clothing is distributed to the people of a village near my home every Christmas. This year, only two people applied. It is time the Treasury took over these sums of money tied up in a cause out-dated by modern conditions.—MRS. L. T., Farnham, Surrey.

Pickles's Other Side

NEVER HAVE I BEEN so deeply touched as when reading Wilfred Pickles's story of the loss of his son. The pictures of David remind me so much of our own four-year-old son that I can well imagine what a great void his death must have left.—MRS. A. SIDDALL, 9 Helen Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

. . . I have often wondered why, in the midst of Wilfred Pickles's light-hearted broadcasts, that sad note creeps into his voice whenever he comes up against tragedy of any sort. Now I know.—MRS. D. R., Norfolk.

Cured By Stillness

OF TWENTY-EIGHT CHILDREN in my school class, twenty-one bit their nails. Fourteen stopped the habit without difficulty but the other seven failed until I gave them daily exercises in maintaining complete stillness for three minutes, not even an eyelid moving. I did this because I believe nail biting to be another form of fidgeting. In less than three weeks, they were all cured.—SCHOOLMASTER, Glamorgan.

Worthless Or Exciting?

SAX ROHMER'S *Hangover House* is an incoherent, unnecessary proliferation of good writing on worthless and—to most of your readers—unfamiliar characters. —A. E. CARPENTER, 25 Church Gardens, Dorking, Surrey.

. . . Sax Rohmer has certainly lost none of his flair for carefully building up an eerie atmosphere. His really exciting story has kept me guessing.—JOHN CLARK, London, S.W.9.

Dinner-time Tactics

BY ACCIDENT I FOUND a new way of persuading my little daughter to eat —by serving a small portion in a very large glass dish. She was delighted and ate several helpings.—MRS. D. M. IRELAND, 14 Manor Crescent, Slyne, near Lancaster.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter

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THE TORY HOPEFULS

by VIRGINIA COWLES

In this brilliant analysis, Virginia Cowles describes the contrasting personalities of the Top Tories—the men now in opposition who aim to win next year's election

Churchill, followed by Walter Elliot and Lord Woolton (right), at Conservative Conference. In spite of Woolton's drive, Tory Central Office still "breathes an air of amiable amateurishness"

BEFORE THE WAR, when you thought of the Conservative Party, you thought of blue ribbons and blue blood; of political talk over vintage port and titled ladies opening garden fêtes. You thought of the Primrose League and the Carlton Club; of country houses, conscientious landlords, and respectful tenants; of a middle class proudly conscious of its betters.

You thought of nationalism, imperialism and patriotism. You thought of an England as imperturbable and well set in its course as the sun; of an England with its roots deeply in the past, resisting all change until that change became inevitable, then accepting the new with enough good grace to preserve the pattern of the old.

Although the Conservative Party was greatly discredited in the years directly preceding the war, when it went to the polls in 1945 led by Winston Churchill at the height of his fame and power, few people predicted its defeat.

Record Of Defeat And Revival

Labour's victory came as a shattering blow and for a time the Conservative ranks appeared to be demoralized and broken. The Socialists proclaimed jubilantly that the Tories were out of power for twenty years, and the Tories revealed the extent of their own agitation by carrying on a heated discussion as to whether the name "Conservative" ought not to be changed to something with a more progressive ring.

Tories who had studied political history, however, refused to become alarmed, for the long record of Toryism is a fascinating study of defeat and revival. Time and again the party, clinging to a defence of the *status quo*, has been swept aside by the great waves of reform that have rolled across the country; time and again the body has been left on the shore for dead. But it has always risen again and oddly enough the resuscitation has usually been accomplished by a leader unrepresentative of the party as a whole; in the eighteenth century it was Bolingbroke and Chatham; in the nineteenth century Disraeli and Lord Randolph Churchill.

Toryism has always reflected the "right wing" of British political thought. The terms "Tory" and "Whig" came into being in the 1680s when the party system began to develop, and from that time until the Labour administrations of the present day one or other of these two divisions provided the governments of England. During the seventeenth century only a few thousand men of property and wealth had voting power.

When the Conservatives, under the leadership of the Duke of Wellington, hotly opposed the rising pressure among the population for the right to vote, the Liberals swept into power, and two years later, in 1832, passed the first great Reform Act, extending the franchise to the middle classes. With the new vote solidly behind them the Liberals became the champions of the new democracy. The Conservatives, except for Peel's five-year ministry in 1841, did not again command a majority in the House of Commons for forty-four years.

During the second half of the last century the Conservatives accepted democracy as inevitable and began to rebuild their party, so long in the wilderness, on these lines.

The man most responsible for the revitalizing of the party during its long years in the wilderness was the brilliant, bizarre, unorthodox Benjamin Disraeli. His great contribution was in reorienting his party to the new democracy; in teaching the upper classes "not to retire to their tents in anger at their lost privileges, but to go down into the street and appeal

Tories' "undisputed crown prince," Eden. "Not much of an orator, but he commands more respect from Socialists than any other Conservative"

to the masses on grounds of patriotic sentiment and Imperial interest."

When Disraeli died in 1881 the torch was carried on by the brilliant, provocative Lord Randolph Churchill, son of the Duke of Marlborough and father of Winston.

"Tory Democracy" caught the imagination of the classes enfranchised during the century, and the Conservative Party was triumphantly returned in 1885 and for nearly fifty out of the sixty years until 1945 either served as partners in wartime coalition governments or completely dominated the political scene.

Party Reselling Itself

Today, once again, the Conservative Party is trying to resell itself to the nation. Many Conservatives have even gone so far as to try to prove that Conservatives, and not Liberals or Socialists, have always been "the party of reform."

The Conservative Central Office has issued a booklet entitled *Conservative Social and Industrial Reform*, and the lengths to which the author has been driven are illustrated by the fact that he has found it necessary to list several reforms as "Tory" without mentioning that they were made law by Whig administrations. Also listed is the repeal of the Combination Act of 1825, but no mention is made of the fact that there would have been no need to abolish this repressive measure had it not been introduced by the Conservatives twenty-five years earlier, and that it was only lifted when the agitation among the working classes was bordering on rebellion.

Sooner or later, "Tory Socialism" may be sold to the British public. The difficulty at the moment is the lack of a Disraeli or a Lord Randolph Churchill to do it. And since no spirited young Tory with the force and eloquence to grip the imagination of the country has come forward, Conservative efforts are concentrated not so much on a rehabilitation of outlook as on a rehabilitation of the party machine.

Soon after the 1945 election Lord Woolton was appointed chairman of the party and given the task of reconstruction. Woolton was not a politician, nor, for that matter, even a party man. "I am a political neuter," he announced when Churchill invited him to become Minister of Food during the war. He began life as a professional economist, then put his theories into practice by building up a successful chain of department stores.

In appearance Lord Woolton is far removed from the usual conception of a self-made business man. In his sixties, with grey hair and a pink complexion, he talks in a precise, almost old-maidish way, reminding one more of a high-school teacher than a party boss. The fact that Lewis's department stores show a profit of a million and a half pounds a year, however, should be some indication of his organizing ability.

Lord Woolton began the job of reorganizing the Conservative Party by appealing for a million-pound "fighting fund."

He has raised the membership of the Conservative Party from one to two million; he has sent "instructor-demonstrators" around the country to teach Conservatives how to canvass; he has lectured the constituency parties on the advisability of adopting candidates of ability rather than wealth. He has studied Herbert Morrison's methods and announced publicly that Herbert "knows his stuff."

The Conservative Central Office itself, however, still breathes an air of amiable amateurishness. The building in which it is housed offers a marked contrast to the modern efficiency of Transport House, the headquarters of the Labour Party.

Transport House is full of new paint and big windows, while Abbey House, the Tory H.Q., has creaking wooden floors, dark corridors, an aged attendant, and an elevator that moves with all the caution of old age. The dingy offices are animated by voluntary workers, most of whom are prospective or defeated candidates, hopeful that their labours will one day be rewarded with winnable seats.

The absence of the professional note is largely due to the fact that the Conservative Party, as a national organization, has never taken any part in shaping policy. This has been left exclusively in the hands of Conservative politicians, and as a result annual conferences have been poorly attended and spiritless. In the last few years Lord Woolton has succeeded in whipping up interest by encouraging members to introduce resolutions; even though they may never be acted upon he believes that the psychological effect is to the good.

Most of the Conservative leaders are men of property; most of them are hard-working, agreeable, conscientious, and ambitious. They view each other with a mixture of friendship and spite bred from a long association, both political and social. But they are united in common detestation of the Socialists and a common belief in their own superiority.

There is little jostling among them for party position, for Anthony Eden's rôle as crown prince is undisputed. Except for Winston no other Tory politician commands so great a following throughout the country. When Churchill retires the mantle of Tory leadership will fall on his shoulders, and therefore he may one day be Prime Minister.

Eden Was Tagged

Eden is the son of a Yorkshire squire, Sir William Eden. He served in the first World War as an artillery captain and was awarded the Military Cross for valour. When he returned to England his mother packed him off to Oxford, where he won first-class honours in Oriental languages. In those days his bent was literary, not political.

He went into the House of Commons largely because it was the sort of thing a gentleman did. And from the first he was tagged by that careless and often fatal phrase "a promising young man." But Eden fulfilled the promise; not only did he rise rapidly from being Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Foreign Minister to being Foreign Minister himself, but his good looks and well-cut clothes excited the imagination of the public and he soon became a world figure; when he went to America in 1937 he received the adulation of a film idol.

However, there was something more in it than that. Eden stood for the League of Nations; he was the symbol of a generation who believed in peace and when it became apparent that there was to be no peace with honour he became the symbol of a generation who also believed in integrity.

Today Eden is fifty-two and grey-haired. As Deputy Leader of the Opposition he spends most of his time in the House of Commons. Many of his party seem puzzled by his success. Some of his critics accuse him of being vain, others of being weak, still others of being superficial. It is true that he rarely makes a profound remark; he has little wit and his speeches are often masterpieces in the use of the cliché. And yet even in the House of Commons he commands more respect from the Labour benches than any other Conservative.

What's the answer? "Cricket," said one of his supporters heartily. "You can always rely on Anthony to play the game!"

R. A. Butler has none of Eden's charm, none of his popularity in the country, none of his following in the Commons. Yet he has done more hard thinking on how to reorient Conservative policy to the postwar world than any other man in the party. He has come to the conclusion that a certain amount of "planning" will have to be swallowed if Toryism is to survive. "Change we are bound to face," he announces, "although all change hurts."

Butler is forty-six and looks even younger. He has an aloof, almost priggish air but is modest and friendly to talk with. The most surprising thing about him is his laugh, which is like a volcano which will not quite erupt; it shakes him savagely, but only giggles emerge.

He had a brilliant career at Cambridge where he was president of the Union and took a double first in modern languages and history. There he met a Miss Courtauld who also took a first in history. He married her and shortly afterwards her father, a famous textile manufacturer, died and left her a million pounds.

Butler received office after being in the House of Commons only a few months; he was Under-Secretary of State for India, for Labour, and for Foreign Affairs. During the war Churchill made him Minister of Education.

To confused supporters who ask Butler exactly what he means by his Tory "planning," he explains: "Our aim is the humanization rather than the nationalisation of industry," adding brightly, "we might call it private enterprise with public responsibility."

Butler's political instinct, never to be driven into a corner, led one newspaper writer to remind the public of a classic statement he made in 1939 when, as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he was called upon in the House for information: "I have every reason to hope that I shall be in a position to say something definite before very long."

Butler's hazy words may confuse his followers but his mind is clear; he knows what he is doing and where he is going; he knows a certain amount of Socialism has come to stay and he intends to stay with it.

Stanley—Second In Line

Oliver Stanley may one day be Chancellor of the Exchequer. During the last four years no other ex-Minister has grown so much in stature. Before the war he was regarded as an able man but a disappointing politician; today only Churchill and Eden supersede him in the party hierarchy.

Tall, grey-haired, and courteous, Oliver Stanley is the product of several centuries of aristocratic statesmen. His father and grandfather, both Earls of Derby, were Cabinet Ministers; his great-grandfather was Prime Minister. "*Sans changer*," the family motto, seemed

Continued on page 28

THE STATE OF THE NAVY

HOW DOES THE ROYAL NAVY measure up to its 1949-and-onwards rôle? Is this most tradition-bound of our institutions alive to the demands of this scientific—and dangerous—age? What sort of a career does the Navy really offer a man today?

JOHN BULL asked Ian Bevan to investigate these vital questions. He has spoken to officers with gold braid on their caps and to young A.B.s humping kitbags. Within security limits, he is able to give fascinating facts about new ships and new methods.

Ian Bevan's important survey of the Royal Navy begins in . . .

John Bull next week

"Bring a child into this world? Not me!" says one. "Can't afford it," says another. But here's a man who is proud to announce he's an . . .

Expectant father—fifth time

by JOHN MAY

DRAWINGS BY RICHARD O. ROSE

Three boisterously mobile; one in high-chair; one on way. "Your head needs examining," says mother-in-law

IF ALL GOES WELL—and naturally I've got my fingers crossed—our 1950 baby will make me a father-of-five. We'd been using the tell-tale grey ration book for some time when one day my wife tossed the news lightly into a gathering of in-laws and friends.

"No fun like raising a large family," I said, backing her up.

The reaction was a bit of a shock. One man looked disgustedly at me as if I were a farm animal. A young woman said to my wife, "I'd sooner you than me."

My mother-in-law, in her friendly way, frequently says I ought to have my head examined. But she stands by her family; she was silent this time.

Lots of people nowadays seem to regard children as nothing but a nuisance, and having them as something of a disgrace. It's an attitude that seems to me crazy.

Advent Of Number Four

Take my fourth son, Jonathan. His arrival was a thrill that nearly killed me, and he's been a joy (with human intervals) ever since.

It was just over a year ago that our bedtime conversation one night ran into an unexpected silence. I could tell my wife was not asleep. "Having baby?" I queried.

"I really don't know," she said. "Perhaps it's something I ate. It seems so silly to get up when you've only just gone to bed."

We dressed. The church clock a mile away bonged out midnight. I crept downstairs with the suitcase of baby clothes like a behind-with-the-rent lodger doing a "moonlight flit."

Down in the kitchen my wife was humming softly but cheerfully. Every now and then "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" stopped short, and she'd grab the back of a chair. I surreptitiously timed from one technical hitch to the next: seven minutes.

"*I've got a beautiful feeling,*" she chanted. "*Everything's coming my way!*"

"I'll say it is," I said. "How about me phoning that hospital?"

"No hurry," she said, catching her breath and then smiling reassuringly. "I'll just put out the breakfast dishes so that everything's ready for you."

Jittery In The Extreme

The only way was to humour her, so I started in to help with setting the table. Even at this simple job, we were about as efficient as a couple of hens in traffic.

If she was erratic, I was like a lunatic jittering with nerves and excitement. Mothers may grow used to prenatal pangs, but fathers like myself never do.

Suddenly she placed an egg and the frying pan carefully on the floor, and sat heavily in a chair. "Hurry up," she said.

Our car had been waiting for its overhaul until after this journey. I stuck the starting handle in and swung vainly. Horror mounted at the thought of it refusing to start—then I remembered to switch on.

Three cylinders coughed and decided to try. One slept on. We got in and tacked carefully down the lane to avoid the potholes.

"Why the fancy driving?" my wife asked irritably. "I'd be snappy myself," I reasoned. I put my foot down. As we painfully picked up speed the fourth cylinder joined in.

Inside the hospital door a nurse took her by the arm. I followed with the bag. Before they shoved me off the premises, I noticed a white cradle and some gas cylinders. It looked as if somebody was going to do a welding job.

On the road home I spotted, glinting forlornly in the moonlight, the starting handle. I'd forgotten to remove it after starting. Finding it somehow bucked me up tremendously.

I reckon we settled uneasily into our different beds about the same time, my wife now at the hospital and I once more at home. They gave her an injection, but I was the one who needed it.

She told me afterwards that nobody seemed to enter or leave her room at the hospital that night. She would open her eyes and they would be there, open them again and they were gone.

The first time, a man was standing beside the bed. "Still here, John?" she murmured in surprise. "Why don't you go home, darling?"

The doctor laughed encouragingly. "How do we feel?" he asked.

"Terrible," she said, and he laughed again.

Patted Herself Hopefully

Next time she looked, he'd gone. Her wrist watch said two o'clock. Babies were crying; she patted herself hopefully beneath the blankets, then decided that somebody was fooling.

A century or two later she realized it must be feeding time in the hospital nursery.

The midwife, masked like a character from the operation scene in a film, appeared with the gas-and-air apparatus. She waved it away. "I couldn't work that," she said weakly. The midwife insisted. Inhaling the gas, she heard herself breathing like a steam train, with the midwife booming orders like a station loudspeaker.

When she opened her eyes again, the doctor sat near reading a magazine. Suddenly he put it down, took her firmly by the wrist, and pressed the gas-and-air mask on her face.

The breath pounded louder and louder in her ears. She kept struggling to get back to consciousness.

Once she came out of the anaesthetic and asked if the baby was born. "Not yet," they said. She looked up and saw the doctor.

He had no shirt and his chest was suntanned a rich mahogany brown. She reached out to touch it. It was his red rubber apron.

Afloat on an ocean dazzling blue, she heard a baby crying, "Ahoy, ahoy!" Suddenly the noise was right near at hand.

"It's a boy," they said.

"Is he healthy?" she asked. "Has

Scrawl on wall; ball through window. . . . But a larger-than-average family *does* give one a stake in the future

he got any hair? How much does he weigh?"

"Weigh? We don't know yet," they laughed. "We've only just got him." Then the walls were moving along on either side of her as they wheeled her away.

There was no doubt that it was all over; she could see her toes poking up the blanket. In a little while they brought in the indignant newborn for her to see.

About then the telephone started ringing here at home. I'd had a dreadful time. I gasped my thanks to the doctor, and in what seemed only minutes was sitting beside my wife, smiling a yard wide.

"A son!" I said, coming rapidly to the point.

"I know," she said. "I was present at the time, dear." She wriggled her toes at herself and laughed softly.

Friends Were Caustic

After a little while I went home, telling the glad news to everyone, including a few strangers in the street.

Neighbours and chance acquaintances in shops and garages were delighted, but friends were inclined to be caustically candid. "More children in these times, old man?" one pal protested. "You must be mad!"

For our parents, it was zeppelins; for us, it's atom bombs. You can take your choice of the dollar shortage or the Russians in Berlin.

The world has always been unsettled. It never was the time to have a baby; it never will be. Thank heavens our ancestors overlooked the fact.

My wife's first visitors (after the relations had all been and gone again) were a young married couple. They have a lonely little only child.

The girl cooed over our new baby, but the man said: "One's enough for us. Can't afford any more."

These two own a flat and an adequate income. I can't understand their outlook. My parents had me and two more, and simultaneously bought a little house—all on thirty shillings a week.

My grandparents (father's side) married at eighteen. They had ten kids and lived till nearly ninety. What's gone wrong since then with the facts of life?

Prefer Car To Babies

Three days after Jonathan was born, I was jerked to the door by a motor horn playing a kind of "Judgment Day" trumpet call; a slick, fortyish friend had come to show off his new car.

"Why not a new baby instead?" I quizzed him. His wife looked horrified. *She* didn't want any bawling kids. She certainly wasn't going to give up *her* freedom.

I had a momentary vision of them, still desperately young, dancing their way into their selfish, lonely sixties.

A week later they sent a large parcel. It was sad in a way to see how generous they were. They expressed their frustrated parental urges in lavish gifts of wool boots, a shawl, a bed-jacket and "something to start his Post Office book."

They became part of the new baby's growing following of adopted uncles, amateur fairy godmothers, and artificial aunts.

Meanwhile, my wife fretted to come home every minute after the first twenty-four hours. At every visit she gave me instructions for weeks of urgent housework. I had to lie valiantly about how much of it was getting done.

And all the time she was growing more suspicious because I was so unexplainably tired. I was painting the hall and stairs—acres of it—as a surprise. Apparently this "painter's fervour" is a normal symptom of proud fatherdom.

When napkins fluttering on the line signalled mother and child were home at last, time went by on greased wheels. From the first "Goo!" at five weeks to a purposeful "Dad-dad-dad" seemed only days.

In a few months the crawling babe turned into a toddler, and the boy who had just learned to walk started shoving chairs around like a furniture man.

Before he was half a year old, Jonathan found himself a sweetheart—a dark-eyed Rose, thirteen, to whom he coos like a turtle-dove. I'm rather looking forward to the parade of pretty girls he and my other three boys will probably bring home in years to come. They're sure to enjoy joining our larger-than-average family circle.

One of my private regrets is that some of our nicest and most intelligent friends have no children, or only one. I want a stake in the future, and to share it with my wife.

At one stage further, we'd like to share with our friends some of the responsibility for the generation after next. I wonder if being a grandpa will be any less strenuous than being father?

Always On The Go

Life with a large family keeps you young—or else. The "baby" insists that my knee is a racehorse; several times a day he rides it to a photo finish and my leg muscles to a frazzle.

Richard, six, has me puffing up and down the lane teaching him to control the small bike which has belonged to both his brothers in their turn.

Garry, twelve, insists on organizing us all into visiting the village funfair; you can no more resist him than a drill sergeant. Rodney, fourteen, keeps you oscillating breathlessly on the other end of a crosscut saw till you're ready to collapse in a humiliated heap.

It's very flattering at times, and very awkward at others, to be treated like an Encyclopaedia of All Knowledge. (The secret is not to bluff; then you can't be caught out.)

Pontificating over meals as a kind of one-man brains trust may leave little time to eat, but it inflates the ego while diminishing the waistline. It also instructs the young.

Expense is a bogy that does not bear looking at. At times the years ahead appear as one long vista of slogging for cash which others are gaily spending. Footing the boot bill, for instance, is eternal.

But the brake on rich living keeps one willy-nilly fit, and the kids keep one happy. There's prolific joy in dousing income tax demands with new birth certificates, and a lesser one in collecting the weekly five bobs of FAM.

Some days, of course, the kids are nothing but a pain in the neck. Rod lies full length on the hearthrug reading, oblivious that anybody else wants to draw up to the fire.

Garry kicks a tennis ball smack through a window; he's already blocked the gutter with one. Somebody—surely not Richard?—has taken to the Old Testament trick of writing cryptic judgments on the wall.

Jonathan? Oh, put that down to teething.

Football in the meadow with the three older boys is not quite so exhausting as running with kites; the old legs can still kick. Tiddler fishing, with our feet dangling in a row from the plank bridge, is more restful.

It won't be long before Jonathan joins in. He is growing already into yet another May personality lustily demanding his full share of any fun or food that's going. There's no longer a baby in the house.

An Occasional Banana

That is one reason why we welcomed the new grey ration book. I only wish that the notice inside—"Queue Priority, Please"—applied also to me. The lot of the expectant father is not all jam. You get a big share of the worry, precious little of the cosseting. About the only "perks" is when you sneak one of the unborn kid's bananas.

Jonathan's mother is definitely looking forward to her fortnight's "holiday" in the hospital next month. "Winter sports," she says.

Knitting needles are already beginning to click off garments no larger than this page. And the argument about names bubbles into life again: Rosemary or Oliver, Christopher or Sue? Some wag is bound to suggest a phrase name, like Mr. "Praise be to God" Barebones in the history books. He'll point out that "Come what" or "Be that as it" would go nicely with our surname.

Can anybody tell us, please, how to make sure the expected baby will be a girl? No? Well, even if this turns out to be my fifth son, there's still a chance.

As my wife said to her mother the other day: "I've got pretty nearly enough baby clothes this time, but I shall want some new things for the *next* one. . . ."

"Don't you dare!" said mother-in-law. She also remarked, rather more heatedly than usual, that I ought to have my head examined.

Ivan, too, tunes in to London

The B.B.C. Overseas Service tells the Russian a home truth or cracks a Czech joke. And its voice gets through

by ***HARRY HOPKINS***

Lindley Fraser broadcasts to Germany. Popular with his Russian Zone listeners is the item, *What You Are Not Supposed To Know*

AS THE HAND of the clock comes up to 3.15 a.m. the red light goes on in one of the eighteen basement studios in Bush House, and a Russian announcer begins to read . . . "London speaks. Listen to the latest news. . . ."

On the collective farms in the Ukraine it is after six and the workers are getting ready to go out into the fields. In a fishing village near Vladivostok it is already afternoon.

All through the night, lights have been burning and teleprinters chattering in this modern Tower of Babel that rises like a high cliff from the Strand. Behind scores of doors proudly pinned with national flags, editors and translators prepare the news of the day in twenty-four languages.

At 4.30 a.m. the easterly Rumanians follow the Russians with the day's "Press Review." As the first buses begin to rumble round the Aldwych, the early-rising Germans get their news, and, after them, the Turks, the Czechs, the Poles, the Hungarians.

By the time the early workers begin to straggle into the streets one world has had the news of the other—the news from London.

From the Strand through the night and through the day the news streams out to Skelton, grey-and-white village in the Cumberland hills, to Rampishan in Dorset, Woofferton in Shropshire, Crowborough in Sussex, Ottringham, perched on Spurn Head, where the long-waves get a smooth water passage to Scandinavia and the Baltic.

Fooling The Jammers

Sitting in the middle of their forests of tall masts, the B.B.C. engineers play their games of hide-and-seek with the Russian jammers. From the fifty-three webs of wire strung out against the Cumberland sky the words go shooting skywards, till the short waves that carry them hit the ionosphere and come bounding down again, thousands of miles away, on the invisible target.

There are around five and a half million radios in Russia—mostly short-wave—and another two and a half million ordered under the present Five Year Plan. How many are ever tuned to London?

"We're working tremendously in the dark," admits Carleton Green, former foreign correspondent who now heads the East European Service. "But, despite the jamming, we believe that the man who is really hungry for information can still get us. How many are they? Well, enough to make it worth while. . . ."

What is certain, too, is that the Kremlin is still being forced to publish news it would rather keep quiet. It was from the "Voice of America" in New York that Russia first heard of Mrs. Kosenkina's jump for freedom from the Soviet Consulate window. She was jumping, Moscow explained some days later, to escape recapture by the Americans. That was before the jamming started on April 25—but the Russians are still being forced into such belated and curious explanations.

Though the B.B.C.'s listener mail has been cut off from the satellite countries, too, here minds are not yet permanently tuned to Moscow and the field is more promising. In Czechoslovakia, with more radios per head than any other "curtain" country, there is an overwhelming hunger for information from the outer world.

Cafés there mysteriously empty when Bruce Lockhart, friend of Benes and Masaryk, goes on the air from London on Friday evenings. There is a current behind-the-hand joke about this.

Communist Hall Emptied

At a certain Communist Party factory meeting on a Friday evening the hall was only quarter filled. As the meeting progressed people kept dribbling away in twos and threes. Finally, looking around the almost empty hall, the chairman consulted his watch, shuffled to his feet and said: "Well, we'd better be getting along home or we'll miss it, too."

The B.B.C. sent that one back over the air. "It's useful," said Gregory MacDonald, head of the Central European Service, "to let them see we know what they're thinking—even what their jokes are."

Fiercely determined to expose their favourite facet of the many-sided truth, more than fifty nations pour into the world's ether upwards of 40,000,000 words a week. Most of them are doomed to oblivion from the start, for the elementary reason that no one ever knows of their existence.

This snag the British and Americans combat by distributing large numbers of illustrated programmes in all the languages they broadcast.

There is an Iron Curtain edition, too, but upon just how this is distributed the B.B.C. prefers not to be specific. For, though listening has not yet been made illegal, "people's police" generally have useful charges to fall back on—like "spreading false news" or "organized group listening to hostile foreign propaganda."

What Does B.B.C. Say?

Yet—just as it did in the war—listening goes on, whatever the risk. When something serious is afoot, all Europe turns to the B.B.C.—its final court of appeal on fact.

It is necessary to go back to the war years to understand the faith which Europe has in the British radio. However many times Goebbels sank the *Ark Royal*, foreign listeners soon discovered that until it sank in the B.B.C. news it could be considered afloat.

"We put the bad news first," an overseas service editor said. "Some bulletins were *all* bad news—but they went out just the same."

The B.B.C. today is anxious to uphold this reputation. In Bush House it is still the rule that all news comes from a common central newsroom, and

They know their public. James Monahan (dictating an overseas bulletin) was dropped in Vichy France. A colleague worked on Polish illegal radio

goes out unslanted, varied only in order and length to suit each customer's field of interest.

Unlike the "Voice," which is now a wing of the State Department, the B.B.C. Overseas Service is proud of its independence from the Foreign Office (which, however, it has the duty of "consulting"). Any suggestion of "political warfare" is frowned on.

Nevertheless, in recent months a markedly less detached tone had been apparent in programmes to the Iron Curtain countries.

The B.B.C. now permits itself, for instance, to reply to the "grosser misstatements." Thus, when Prague tells the world that British children have no milk, London comes out at once with the impressive facts and figures.

When Moscow's "Map of the World" commentator, Boris Izakov, asserts that even in the heart of London ("the abode of the Imperialist Octopus") pedestrians have become scarce by nine o'clock, the B.B.C. invites him to come and stand in Piccadilly any night and—in the presence of an independent photographer and reporter—receive the freedom of its Russian service microphone.

B.B.C. men remain wary of becoming involved in "You're Another" exchanges. Their true job, they think, is to "expose the pattern of Communism" and for this there is no lack of material to draw on.

Clearest indication of the new trend was the opening on April 1 this year of a special programme for the Russian Zone of Germany. "We wanted not only to counteract the false news from Leipzig and Berlin, but also to show them they are not abandoned and forgotten," says Lindley M. Fraser, former professor of economics who became famous throughout Germany for his wartime broadcasts.

Popular feature of the East Zone nightly half-hour is *Without Signature*—compiled from extracts from letters about conditions of life and work in the "People's New Germany." Other items: *What You Are Not Supposed to Know—News from the West—Facts Give the Reply*.

Babble Is Tremendous

But the speakers in London do not have the ether to themselves. As he sits in his kitchen turning the tuning dial of his radio across the thirty-one-metre band, sixty transmitters in a dozen countries fight for the ear of the miner of Dresden or the weaver of Chemnitz.

The waveband has—in theory—room for twenty. The babble is tremendous. From the big grey Soviet-occupied Rundfunkhaus in the British sector of Berlin, the Communists are roaring: "Anglo-Americans, go home!"

"Praised be Jesus Christ!" repeats a sonorous voice three times. It is the Vatican. But the Pope's transmitters—gifts from Marconi—are old and this battle favours the strong. Britain, fortunately, has at her disposal not only the biggest shortwave and the most powerful longwave stations in the world, but also an unrivalled foreign broadcasting organization, radiating each week over seven hundred hours of news, entertainment and instruction in forty-seven languages to every corner of the globe.

Britain's supremacy in the ether is today almost as marked as her navy's once was on the sea. It is one of our most remarkable—and least publicised—achievements. All the more so because we did not make a real start till 1938, by which time Hitler had ringed his frontiers with shortwave transmitters and Sieg Heils and throaty menaces were rolling round the world.

It was not, however, Hitler, but Mussolini who finally drove us to the ether by giving away to the Arabs thousands of radios permanently tuned to Bari whence he proceeded to serve them up daily such titbits of information as that British agents in India were busy colouring their tea with hog's blood, that, in any case, the "whisky-and-potato race" was done with.

The B.B.C.'s Arabic Service was launched in the spring of 1938 and six months later the European Service came into being when, at the request of the Foreign Office, the B.B.C. put out Chamberlain's Munich peace-with-honour speech in French, German and Spanish. From such sorry beginnings Britain's overseas broadcasting was forged in the second World War into the efficient and powerful instrument it is today.

Fought In Warsaw

Bush House is, in 1949, the most cosmopolitan building in Europe. Its staff of eight hundred men and women of twenty-four nationalities constitutes an extraordinary assembly of knowledge and experience. Their approach is far from academic. One of the Polish members, for instance, operated an underground radio station during the war, fought in the Warsaw Rising.

They know just what the man in Europe Street wants—and *how* he wants it. That, for instance, you can feed a long talk to the Czechs, but in Poland—where the bulk of the intelligentsia has gone—a feature with several voices is called for; that Hungary will go heavily for satire which may not go down so well with the more stolid, serious-minded Czechs.

The B.B.C.'s foreign service is, nevertheless, often criticized on the ground that it carries objectivity to—and beyond—the point of dullness. The Voice of America *tells* the world. The B.B.C. merely announces coldly that "it is believed. . . ."

But foreign broadcasting is very much of a long-term operation and over the long term, the B.B.C. has shown, rigid objectivity pays high dividends. For radio possesses a unique ability to trap the liar in his own tangled webs.

When the Hungarian Government published its "Black Book" of the Mindszenty Case, the B.B.C. was able to rebroadcast to Hungary its own recordings of the Budapest radio's transmissions from the court room, conclusively showing just where and how the Black Book had been doctored.

This dredging for truth at the bottom of the ether's wordy well is the job of the monitoring organization.

With a multi-lingual staff, four hundred strong, the B.B.C. monitoring station at Caversham listens to two hundred broadcasts a day from forty different countries, combs and records a million words from the babble in the ether, to be digested again by sub-editors into the 50,000-word monitoring report—a daily pulse-and-temperature chart of the world.

Many millions of these words that come winging out of the ether are Russian. Ten nations broadcast to Russia. Russia herself broadcasts in over twenty languages.

The Russians were in fact the pioneers of international broadcasting. Shortwave transmitters in Moscow were calling on the workers of the world to unite even in the twenties.

Goebbels's Private Life

Is Russia today as formidable an "ether power" as this long start would suggest? In war, perhaps, yes. Moscow's unprintable revelations about the private life of Joseph Goebbels—including details on exactly whom he was dallying with that night—drove the Nazis to desperation.

But in the longer perspectives of peace such sledge-hammer methods—which are all the Russians seem to know — are of more doubtful value. However well such stuff may go down in darkest Africa, among the teeming millions of the Orient, or in Russia itself, in Europe even a Party member may well feel a twinge of doubt when informed by Moscow that homeless Londoners, driven to living herded on boats on the Thames, are complaining bitterly of seasickness.

It would, nevertheless, be a dangerous mistake to underestimate the hypnotic mind-bludgeoning power of this tremendous non-stop radio barrage. As Hitler showed before Stalin, it is the weapon which makes the successful war of nerves possible.

Yet, as Hitler also demonstrated, it is a weapon that is dangerously two-edged.

It was the radio that in the black year of 1940 rallied the stricken French nation around a leader it could not see. Heard behind locked doors and barred windows, the strokes of Big Ben became the heart-beat of the resistance throughout the occupied countries. A few words spoken into a microphone, and Vs flowered across Europe.

What It All Costs

That is why, today, a well-placed shortwave station becomes as vital as an airbase, why to their New York-Munich-Honolulu-Manila radio network the U.S. State Department now plans to add Liberia and Tangier.

And the cost to the British taxpayer? For the entire Overseas Service, £4,000,000 annually, of which the European service accounts for £1,400,000. The cost, someone has said, of a battleship—and the value of a fleet.

An understatement—for here is the single weapon against which Totalitarianism can have no defence.

Frontiers can be sealed, schoolbooks distorted, newspapers suppressed, but on the shortwaves the truth still gets through.

The miracle of LOT 111

Were they gamblers? Or were they mad? And why, the Rev. John wondered uneasily, were they staring at him?

by GODFREY BARRASS

ILLUSTRATED BY NARRAWAY

The Rev. John polished his glasses and bent to admire the table. "That's him," said Charlie Morris briefly

WHEN THE Rev. John Henley had removed his clerical collar in the station lavatory on arrival at Miklesborough and substituted a soft collar and a tie which was in tone with his mild appearance and neat grey suit, it did not occur to him that this simple action, stealthily performed with one spectacled eye on the lavatory attendant, might be the prelude to an occurrence which he was later to regard as nothing short of a miracle.

Some twenty-five years in a remote country parish, with leisure devoted to his garden and a study of the classics, had produced in the Reverend John an unworldliness unique in these days of combined science and theology. He had seldom left his parish and would not have left it now but for an urgent need of money; to be precise, £150.

Not wanting to be seen entering the premises of a moneylender in his clerical collar, the Reverend John had removed it. Inside the moneylender's office disillusion had come quickly, for the advertised "Advances up to £5,000 on note of hand alone" became a nightmare of sureties, with repayment at such staggering interest that the Reverend John reeled away to a frugal lunch, thereafter to wander aimlessly for several hours until his train went back.

He paused before the notice "Now Selling" outside an auction room, vaguely wondering if any of his cherished possessions could raise the money he needed. There were so many bills. . . .

He wandered into the musty auction room where the sale, interrupted for lunch, was about to continue, glanced with distaste at a pair of gaudy Oriental vases and moved with the crowd. A delicately ornamented table attracted him and he paused to admire it, unaware that his action was arousing the considerable interest of eight men who stood in a group by the entrance.

ONE of these, Mr. Charles Morris, had been watching him intently since his unassuming entrance. The Reverend John wiped his spectacles and examined the table closely. The grime of ages had settled on it, but after a thorough cleaning it would make a welcome addition to the vicarage drawing-room. He pulled out a drawer and scrutinized the workmanship. Certainly it was a beautiful piece of work.

This last action convinced Mr. Charles Morris. The droop of the shoulders, the long nose and that way of wiping his spectacles. . . . Yes, it was old Foster all right.

He swore softly. It was bad enough to have to share that table with seven local men, but to have to bid against one of London's foremost antique furniture experts was just too much.

"That's him," he announced briefly.

One of the men addressed said, "Are you sure?"

Morris nodded grimly. The biggest of the eight provincial dealers, he had seen the London expert more than once, although he had never spoken to him. "That's John Foster all right," he declared, savagely biting a cigar stump. "And if he's after that table you can bet your boots it's a right 'un."

The table was listed simply as "Lot 111—small French inlaid table with brass mounts." Morris had been by no means sure that it was actually the work of that great eighteenth-century craftsman Riesener and, as such, worth anything up to 2,000 guineas; but the evident interest of one he believed to be Mr. John Foster

himself was convincing evidence. Morris cursed inwardly.

Of course, they could make old Foster pay through his long nose for it; but what good would that do to Charlie Morris? The only hope was to get old Foster in with them and let him have the table at their price. The question was, would he come in?

Morris held a muttered conversation with the others, and strolled towards the Reverend John Henley with an assumed air of unconcern.

The Reverend John had left the table and was admiring a grandfather clock when he became aware that a voice was addressing him. He turned to look down at a red-faced man in a bowler hat who was asking what seemed a very strange question, and asking it very quietly.

"I said, 'Are you comin' in?'" Morris repeated huskily.

The Reverend John considered him in mild astonishment. If "coming in" meant into the auction room, the question seemed to be that of an idiot. Yet the man looked sane enough and did not appear to have been drinking.

"I fear I do not understand," the clergyman said gravely. "Who—who are you?"

"The name's Morris, Charles Morris, of Morris and Goldberg. Don't suppose you've heard of us?"

The Reverend John said he had not, and waited for some further explanation.

"We've heard of you though," Morris went on slyly. "And we know why you're in Miklesborough."

The Reverend John gasped. "You—you know why I'm here?"

"Sure. We all do. There's eight of us."

THE astounded clergyman composed himself. How could this odd little man possibly know that he had come all the way from his parish in the hope of borrowing money? He had told no one, not even Mary, who believed him to be away on some parochial matter.

"My good man," he said calmly, "if you will be so good as to explain yourself a little more fully I may be able to answer your question."

Morris concealed his impatience. He had heard old Foster referred to as Foxy Foster. Now he knew why. "Listen," he said deliberately, "there's eight of us all together on one-one-one. Now, are you with us or against us?"

The Reverend John stared at him. Appearances were deceptive. The man was probably not actually insane, but he was certainly a little queer. It was always best to humour such people.

"My good man," he said amiably, "you may be sure that I am not against you and your friends." As a happy afterthought he added: "Why not go and tell them?"

Morris brightened. "O.K.," he murmured, and departed as the auctioneer mounted the rostrum.

The Reverend John watched while the Oriental vases passed under the hammer and other lots followed in quick succession. With a feeling of regret at being unable to bid for it he saw the delightful ornate table knocked down to someone for £27. He decided to leave, and was hesitating in the doorway, wondering how best to pass the time until his train went, when a number of men passed him going out. The last of these was the odd little man who had accosted him earlier.

"Let's go over to my place," he said. "We can settle up there."

Too amazed to resist, the Reverend John found himself swept along with the others.

They turned into a side street and entered a doorway below the legend "Morris and Goldberg."

Here Mr. Morris ushered the party through an antique shop to a back room where a number of chairs were arranged around a large table.

Someone offered him a chair and he sat down. The man next to him appeared to have assumed the rôle of chairman. Mr. Morris was seated on this man's left.

In a sudden silence the chairman said: "Well, there's only one thing to settle and that's the table. Anything for you?" he asked Mr. Morris.

"Twenty-five quid," Morris said calmly.

"Same," murmured the man on Morris's left.

"Twenty-five—fifty," said the chairman, and began slowly to shift his gaze from one to another clockwise round the table.

"Seventy-five — one hundred — one twenty-five."

The Reverend John listened bewildered while the chairman's voice continued to drone.

"One-fifty, one seventy-five, two hundred." The chairman had looked into his eyes, passed to Mr. Morris and on again round the table, increasing the number each time he shifted his gaze.

The clergyman sat spellbound while the table was circled several times and the monotonous droning of numbers continued. Was it possible they were gambling? And yet there were no cards, no dice, nothing except this weird droning of numbers, which had already reached four figures.

"One thousand and ten," said the chairman, and as his eyes turned from those of the Reverend John to those of Mr. Morris, the parson sensed that the atmosphere had become tense. The chairman's voice now had an emotional ring. Instead of passing quickly from one man to the next he now gazed fixedly at each in turn and waited for a nod or a word before transferring his gaze.

It was then that an entirely new move entered the game, for without hesitation and very emphatically one of the players announced, "I'm out."

Other withdrawals followed. As the chairman's eyes met those of Mr. Morris, the Reverend John suddenly realized that only three players were left—himself, the chairman and Mr. Morris. The latter seemed to have become even redder in the face and to be struggling to make a decision. Suddenly, recklessly it seemed, Mr. Morris nodded.

"One thousand and fifty," said the chairman, and turned to the Reverend John, on whom all eight pairs of eyes were now focused. The Reverend John gazed bewildered round the table. Clearly some decision was expected of him, and in the circumstances the popular policy of withdrawal seemed the most sensible one. He sighed audibly and said slowly: "I—I think I'll retire, too."

It was an obvious anti-climax. Chairs were pushed back noisily. Someone laughed, but it was not Mr. Morris. With a muttered exclamation, which the Reverend John did not catch, that gentleman produced a large coloured handkerchief and blew his nose loudly.

"It's all yours, Charlie," the chairman announced cheerfully, "at one thousand and fifty. You can clear it yourself and welcome. Let's see, how much is that in the kitty?"

He began to make paper calculations and presently passed them to Mr. Morris, who glanced through them and addressed the Reverend John. "That's one hundred and eighty-five quid to you," he said hoarsely. "I'll get you the cash."

In utter amazement the parson watched him get up and leave the room. The others were talking noisily, but in terms as incomprehensible as before. What a fantastic business, he thought. This odd Mr. Morris had indicated that they all knew he wanted to borrow money. Manifestly that was absurd, and yet after this outlandish game of arithmetical rounders it appeared that he was to receive £185—thirty-five more than he had attempted without success to borrow that morning. And so far there had been no question of interest or repayment.

As the Reverend John was attempting to ask the chairman for an explanation, Mr. Morris bounced back into the room and thrust a wad of notes into his hand. "There you are. One hundred and eighty-five. Better count them."

In the general buzz of conversation the Reverend John sought out the chairman.

"I am utterly perplexed," he said to him, as the others followed Morris from the room.

"Perplexed?" The chairman got up and handed the parson his hat. "What about?"

"It is this money. I—I think there must be some mistake."

The chairman shook his head. "The amount's correct all right, I worked it out myself and Morris checked it. That's your share all right, Mr. Foster."

The Reverend John blinked at him.

"Foster! But, my dear sir, my name is not Foster."

"You're—you're not Foster?" The chairman had stopped and was staring unbelievingly at the Reverend John. "You're not John Foster, of Foster and Willis?"

"Most certainly not. I am the Reverend John Henley, and I must get back to my parish. This money now. . . ."

But the chairman had burst into loud laughter.

The Reverend John said severely: "I must ask you to tell me plainly what has been happening. Also, I must return you this money."

The dealer became serious at once. "You want to give the money back?"

"I do not want to, but I fear I must. I should be willing to accept it as a loan at a reasonable rate of interest. But why was it given to me?"

The dealer looked at him queerly. "You mean to say you don't know you've been in a 'knock out'—a dealers' knock out? Well, I'll be jiggered!"

"Is it absolutely necessary, dear, to make holes in *all* your things?"

BRIEFLY he explained that as they all knew the table was valuable it was better for one of them to get it at the lowest price and afterwards to auction it among themselves. Whoever got it in the end paid no more than he would have had to at the sale with the others bidding against him, and the money paid at the "knock-out" auction would be divided among all present according to the amount each had bid.

"See what I mean?" he continued. "We were all in for the 'knock money,' and the higher the price the more there is to split. But for you Charlie Morris would never have gone to that figure and we'd none of us have got as much as we did. Charlie wanted that table anyhow, but he knew he couldn't outbid you—that is if you'd been John Foster—so he was going to hit you for 'knock money' good and plenty. The joke is that you hit him instead. He won't lose though. He'll get a couple of thousand easy for that table before he's through."

Bewildered, the Reverend John said: "I fear I am not a business man, but to whom does this money belong?"

"No one but you, sir."

The Reverend John sighed. Though he needed the money so badly, his conscience told him it would be wrong to take it. He shook his head slowly and sadly and held out the wad of notes.

"I must ask you to take it back."

The dealer looked at him soberly. "You spoke of a loan just now. You need money, eh?"

Embarrassed, the Reverend John explained the purpose of his visit.

"Now listen to me," said the dealer. "If I was to take that money I'd have to split it with the others, and that wouldn't be honest because it isn't ours. Whoever owned that table certainly didn't know its value or he'd have put a reserve on it. And as like as not he never paid a penny more for it than he got in that sale—maybe less. Take my tip and hang on to that money: you need it. Listen," he added, noting the parson's hesitation, "do you believe in miracles? You ought to, you know, if you preach about them. Never used to believe in 'em myself, but if this isn't a bloomin' miracle, what is?"

He paused, and then added slowly: "He moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

The Reverend John smiled and put the money in his pocket. It was a happy smile, the smile of a man at peace with himself. He was still smiling as he left the shop and strode towards the station.

Hitchcock with Jane Wyman and Richard Todd, who appear in *Stage Fright*, his forty-first and latest film

Hitchcock dwarfs even the stars

by IAN COSTER

Undisputed master on the set, he puts stars in their proper place. His very name sells films. In a trade of ups and downs, he's up top and he's staying there

"FIGHTERS," SAID THE boxing manager who had lived most of his life on them, "they're just animals." Hitchcock—the film-maker, Alfred the Great—is alleged to have made a similar remark: "Film stars are cattle."

I doubt if he was ever indiscreet enough to say that, but at the back of that active, unscrupulous mind there must be the thought that stars are his puppets, to be moulded and controlled until they fit into a Hitchcock pattern.

"Anybody with a grain of intelligence can act in films," he once told me, "provided they do what I tell them."

Hitchcock is more important than his stars. He knows it, they know it and, what is more important, the cinema industry on both sides of the Atlantic knows it.

Twenty years ago in England his films were sold to exhibitors not by the names of the principal players but as "the new Hitchcock film." Now America does the same thing. This is a dizzy eminence to reach in that hard-hearted, cut-throat business—the film trade. Few others have reached it. Griffith the pioneer did. Capra did. René Clair did. Lubitsch did.

The extraordinary thing is that in an industry which follows the slogan, "a director is as good as his last picture," Hitchcock has managed to stay up there, a selling name in big letters above the film's title.

Aims At Man-in-street

Twenty-nine of Hitchcock's fifty years have been spent in the arduous, chancy, dispiriting, exhilarating and sometimes crazy business of trying to make worthwhile films which will appeal to the public. Make no mistake—Hitch is commercial. He is not interested in fashioning a work of art for a few intellectuals.

The great big, blundering English-speaking public is always his target. "Tell 'em a story and make 'em understand," is his aim.

W. Somerset Maugham, that great story-writer, swears that all his literary craftsmanship is devoted to one end: to tell a tale. Hitchcock has the same idea except that he illustrates it, using subtle tricks of sound and shadow. Neither wants to preach or make the world better.

"In America you have to make films for the ice-box trade," Hitch says. He explains that in that unrationed land there is always something edible in the ice-box—usually chicken. And whenever husband and wife have seen a new film they return home and open the ice-box, take out a leg of chicken and hold a post-mortem. Then they tell their friends.

Hitch thinks that the ice-box trade with its word-of-mouth publicity is much more important than the critics. It can make or break a film.

As we talked of food Hitch revealed his old loathing for eggs. "The idea of them makes me sick; I have never eaten an egg in my life. Is there anything more nauseating than the idea of a hard-boiled egg? Ugh!"

Any psychologist could find a good reason for this. My own idea is that rotund Hitch associates himself, possibly unconsciously, with Humpty-Dumpty. There is an undoubted physical resemblance.

Though he was once much heavier, Hitchcock now weighs fourteen stone, which is enough, considering that he is only five feet eight inches tall. He is apple-cheeked, bright eyed. His lower lip juts out aggressively. He speaks with a hoarse, low-pitched voice and keeps a dead-pan face, especially when he is indulging in practical jokes, one of his favourite occupations.

A Cockney, Hitchcock was born in London on August 13, 1899.

Originally intending to be an engineer, he soon found that he preferred art. While employed in a firm as sketch artist and layout man he spent his spare moments drawing funny pictures of the directors.

But films were his real goal. He roamed Wardour Street, "the only street in the world that is shady on both sides," hoping to break in.

In 1920 he got a part-time job which was followed by regular employment in a film studio, writing and designing titles, those brief captions which were thrown on the screen to fill in gaps, emphasize dramatic moments, give bits of dialogue and generally supplement the silent miming.

Oh, Hard Lines, Sir!

An example of this sort of thing is nostalgically related by Sir Michael Balcon. "My mind," he says, "turns back to a film, *Downhill*, directed by Hitchcock and starring Ivor Novello, as the captain of a public school.

"A young woman in the village, finding herself in a state of health not appropriate to a spinster, called on the headmaster of the school. The Head, somewhat narrow-minded, dealt with our hero who was obviously sheltering his best friend.

"Told that he was to be expelled, the subtitle put these words into the hero's mouth: 'Does that mean, sir, that I shall not be able to play for the Old Boys?'"

Hitch must have loved that line.

The first time Hitchcock was in charge on the studio floor was by an accident. The director making a trifle called *Always Tell Your Wife* became ill.

According to Sir Seymour Hicks, who had written the play: "I was at my wits' end to know what to do. Being on the verge of throwing the whole thing up, I was interested when a fat youth, who was in charge of the property room, volunteered to help me. . . .

"We carried on as co-directors and the picture was finished. Who do you think that boy was? None other than Alfred Hitchcock."

By 1925 Hitch's apprenticeship was complete. Balcon entrusted the twenty-six year old with *The Pleasure Garden*. It was an efficient job and was well reviewed, but it seems to have lacked what the public has now come to recognize as the Hitchcock touch.

Words The Main Ingredient

What is this touch that transforms a staid melodrama into electric entertainment? It is Hitchcock's analytical brain first allied to the sense of words, his talent for design and his technical mastery of his medium.

Words, says Hitchcock, are the basis of films. It is no use playing about with camera angles and lighting tricks until you have put plainly down on paper what effect you are trying to get. Preparation of a script has always been a ritual to him.

In the old days, often in black pyjamas, Hitch used to preside over literary disembowellings and buildings-up, with the help of Alma Reville, his petite, pretty wife—who often gets credits on his films—and Kay Harrison, then his secretary and script writer but now one of Hollywood's two women producers.

Anyone who came into his modest Cromwell Road flat was drawn into these long discussions. Sometimes Hitch would adjourn the conference and suggest a resumption at some appropriate place. He once decided

Alfred Hitchcock: a Humpty-Dumpty figure with a dead-pan face and soft voice. A practical joker who loves to film violence and intrigue

that the spot to prepare a story was the end of Southend Pier and, on another occasion, he announced that they would rewrite as they glided along the Thames. Hitch hired a river boat which was licensed to carry 300 people for the job.

Like most movie directors, he is careful and painstaking. Hitchcock also has constant flashes of sheer inspiration. In *The Ring*, for instance, the winning boxer came home, poured out champagne for everybody—then realized his wife was out with another man. Hitch cut to the glass of wine, bubbling itself flat, a symbol of hollow victory.

Thrills Of The Chase

Hitchcock loves violence and intrigue. After he had made one of his few failures, *Waltzes from Vienna*, he said: "I hate this stuff. Melodrama is the only thing I can do." He is never happier than when working out the details of a cinematic chase and adding those dramatic incidents which get the audience on the edge of their seats.

There is no concealing the cruel streak in Hitch. It sometimes comes out on the set, for he has a biting tongue. "Come on, you Quota Queen," he has croaked at a leading actor who, in the old days, was not giving what Hitch wanted.

One of his famous practical jokes was perpetrated when he was making *The Thirty-nine Steps* with Madeleine Carroll and Robert Donat. Seeking a logical projection of the boy-hates-girl and vice versa but they-must-stay-together situation, he thought of handcuffing them together. It made a fine run of cinematic comedy.

But one day his eye lighted on an assistant. "I'll bet £5," he said, "that you can't keep a pair of handcuffs on for twenty-four hours." The assistant took the bet.

After the day's shooting, Hitch put the cuffs on his aide. Then he insisted on treating him to drinks. Every drink was liberally dosed with what Hitchcock called "dollop."

A wan assistant reported for duty next day. He was still handcuffed. Hitch said he was terribly sorry when he heard the story of a restless night, eased to some extent by the man's ever-loving wife. He unlocked the cuffs and handed over the fiver.

Joke On Gerald Du Maurier

His best joke, in his own estimation, was the one he played on Gerald du Maurier during the run of *Behold We Live* at the St. James's Theatre. Sir Gerald entered his dressing-room after Act I and found it full of horse. Hitch had hired a grocer's nag and parked it there. The actor didn't blink an eye. He gave the horse a casual slap on the neck, said "Hallo, old man," and sat down at his dressing-table.

"The most satisfactory practical joke is one to which the victim responds as magnificently as that," said Hitch.

Hitch absorbs detail from people around him. His daughter, Patricia, a promising actress who has appeared on the New York stage, came to London to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. So Hitch has put R.A.D.A. in his latest film, *Stage Fright*, given Pat a small part and made Jane Wyman a student who becomes an amateur sleuth.

"I've got the Theatrical Garden Party in, too," Hitch said, "and I've got it in the pouring rain." This raised a howl from Michael Wilding who was wearing one of his own suits in the scene and had visions of it being ruined. If I know Hitch, Michael got a thorough drenching, too.

In his well-cut flannel suit, Hitchcock wanders about the set, leaving the technicians to carry out his detailed instructions. Marlene Dietrich made more suggestions than he did on the set of *Stage Fright*—his forty-first film—and he did not resent it.

"She's the best technician among actresses," he confided to me. "She knows this business backwards."

A great test of his equanimity, however, came on the set of *Under Capricorn*, the Australian story with Ingrid Bergman, Joseph Cotten and Michael Wilding, which he made at Elstree. One of his imported truck-and-camera cranes, moving softly along its rails, ran over half of his foot.

Everybody expected a bellow of pain and an explosion. Hitch withdrew his foot, stood silently on one leg while technicians crowded around and said: "Oh, Mr. Hitchcock, are you hurt?"

"It'll be all right," said Hitch, quietly. "I hope the crane isn't hurt."

When He Films Himself

Ever since *The Lodger* (1926) Hitch has been putting his trade mark on his films by appearing as a very minor character for a few seconds. He claims that he never plans this but jumps in on the spur of the moment.

It has long been a game for film reviewers and for Hitch's wide public to see who can spot him first. In *Lifeboat* he was faced with a serious difficulty because the whole action took place in a ship's boat and no extras could pop in and out. He solved *that* by appearing as a model in a reducing advertisement in a newspaper being read by one occupant of the boat.

No sooner is one Hitchcock film "in the can" than he is planning the next. "It's my life," he says. "I pity the people who spend eight hours a day at a job they don't like and then have to rush off somewhere to start living. Work should be enjoyable, satisfactory, funny, exciting. Mine is."

Television Doesn't Worry Him

With that attitude to work, naturally he thinks all games are silly. Why should he chase a golf ball? Or try to sit on a horse? Or swim? ("Ours is the only place without a swimming pool in Hollywood," he says.) His only relaxations from the troubled delight of film-making are music and painting — he collects modern artists and has been known to spread colour on canvas in studies of still life.

Hitchcock has weathered the coming of sound and the coming of colour. The threat of television does not worry him: as a teller of tales he can, if necessary, master a new medium, but he does not think it yet menaces his beloved films.

Not so daft

by DUDLEY HOYS
ILLUSTRATED BY TONY WEARE

Old Eb didn't like twisters. But if a man had twisted you it was only right you should twist him back, wasn't it?

Eb said grimly: "Reet. I'll make tha pay for this." The bookies went on bawling the odds

ACCORDING TO EB DACRE, three wrongs can make a right. It was a long time before he would tell me his reasons. When he did, I was inclined to agree with him.

Eb is a typical Cumbrian dalesman, thin, long-nosed, with aloof grey-blue eyes, and aged about sixty. Like most of his kind, he does not believe in forgiving a wrong. No. The offender must be made to pay for it.

The first and second of the three wrongs occurred at the Iredale hound-trails. The southerner has his football and cricket and tennis and whatnot. They mean little to us. There is no flat ground to play ball games. Instead, we have a sport that blends thrills and poetry, especially on a bright day.

Two men dragging sacks soaked with aniseed and paraffin lay a scented trail for ten miles across fell-breasts and crags, boulders and scree and brackens and high heather slopes laced by tumbling becks. The course runs in a circuit, beginning and ending at some field in the dale. The leggy and rippling hounds cover it in about half an hour. See the effortless streaking of them against the upthrust welter of colour and you will admit there are drabber sports.

EB, who had finished his lambing season and sent his ewes and lambs back to the fells, had taken the afternoon off and gone along to the trail-ground with a pound or two to gamble in his pocket. After a blind morning, peaks and crags veiled by whispering rain, the day had faired up into clean brilliance.

The bookies were arriving from Greyhaven and Egremont, and setting up their boards in the muddy field. Farmers and shepherds were greeting one another with "How's fettle?" and discussing possible winners with solemn wisdom. Some of the entries for the puppy-trail, already present in their blanket jackets, were letting out excited yaps.

Eb strolled over to the bookies. Trimmer was due to run, and once he saw Trimmer's name up as a definite starter, he would ignore the rest. Trimmer was enjoying a triumphant season, and no other dog stood a chance against him.

Presently the name was being chalked up all along the line of boards. The odds were very short, five to two on.

"'Tis nay worth it," said old George Royds, who had retired from farming three years back.

"Ay, 'tis," said Eb in his slow way, "when yon's bound to win."

He went up to Joe Spilch and his brother, two hard-faced, bullet-headed bookies from Greyhaven, put five pounds on Trimmer for a win, and received the usual card.

"At best," said George, "you'll only win two pounds, and if Trimmer loses——"

"'Tis a very small if," declared Eb. It was. Hound-trail favourites seldom fail their backers. Hence the short odds. The remainder of the field was at fives and twenties, in the latter class being a dark-haired dog called Black Streak, of no reputation, recently bought by Luke Bransty, also of no reputation.

As Eb pointed out, Trimmer couldn't lose. The going was just right for him, neither too hard nor too soft. He had the speed and the stamina. His owner, it was rumoured, fed him on cock-loaf, that luxurious diet of the old cock-fighting days, made with flour and eggs and butter and milk and port and sherry and raisins, first cooked, and then sliced and toasted.

"If Food Office knew," said the grinning George, "they'd 'ave a fit."

The starter gave his high-pitched call. Eleven leashed dogs came pattering along to the line, and the men acting as slippers began to unstrap their protecting jackets. There was a general surge of spectators across the field to watch the start.

Eb surveyed the beginning of the course, two tussocky fields divided by a dry-stone wall and backed by a strip of spinney. Beyond that, a sharp rake of fell climbed up a thousand feet, a tilt speckled with chunks of granite, and glimmering here and there where mosses oozed their drainage into slurries of scree and water.

A marshy stretch smeared the top of the rake with fluffy cotton-grass and spriggy bog-myrtle. Bulging crags hid the course for the next mile. The dogs would reappear for a minute or two on the open fell-breast beneath Birks Moor, and vanish again among the wildness until the last great run down.

A figure, trotting and dragging a sack, appeared out of the spinney. The dogs let out a wild yammering. He stopped, and the next second they were flowing towards him and past him. Topping the wall with the silky lightness of birds, they streamed across the second field, the lemon-and-white Trimmer already leading.

Eb grunted. "Yon's a good one," he said with the confidence of certainty, stuffed his pipe, and prepared to puff in patience for the next twenty-five minutes.

There was a lull until small groups started to drift back across the field towards the winning line. Owners were waiting there with whistles and bits of meat. The dogs were due to emerge through a gap in a granite ridge before pelting down eight hundred feet of bracken-flanked sheep-track.

A shepherd split the quiet with a crazy

yell and stuck out a gnarled hand. A few Herdwick sheep, tiny dun blobs at that distance, were scuttling suddenly along the face of the granite gap, most likely startled by approaching trail-hounds.

Seconds later there was a bewildered sighing among the crowd. For once the unexpected had baffled the wise. Black Streak was lolloping down the fell-breast all on his own. He had crossed the beck at the bottom of the slope before the second dog, Trimmer, loomed into the gap on high.

There was a certain amount of muttering among the experts. Eb shrugged philosophically, took his useless ticket out of his pocket, tore it up, and tossed the bits away.

Something was happening at the entrance to the field. He saw a man waving and shouting to the judges. Soon everybody was hearing the announcement. Black Streak had been disqualified. Luke Bransty had been up there, high on the fells, snatched his dog from the outward leg of the circuit, and dumped it down on the return leg.

THAT was the first wrong. The second followed shortly. Trimmer was declared the winner, and Eb moved back to the muddy patch where he had been standing, to search for those bits of ticket. They'd gone.

But, he told himself, Joe Spilch had a record of the bet, and would pay him out without the ticket, if he explained. He walked across to the line of bookies.

Joe Spilch's eyes were as expressionless as a seagull's.

"Where's ticket?" was all he said.

"Ah've told you. When Black Streak came in, I tore it oop."

Joe Spilch's brother did some staring as well, cold, blank staring.

"Where's ticket?" he said.

Anger gave an edge to Eb's voice. "Haven't ah told you? Tore oop it is, and tha knows why."

"Where's bits?" said Joe.

Eb growled. "Once and for all, ah can't find 'em."

"You'll get nowt," said Joe, and began to bawl the odds for the puppy-trail.

Eb's mouth settled into a thin line. "Reet. I'll make tha pay for this."

They went on bawling the odds as if he had no existence.

That was the second wrong. The committing of the third had to bide many weeks.

Wearing a taut, inward look, Eb trudged back to his farm, a couple of miles along the dale road. He met his son Tom, repairing a stone wall.

Tom took much after his father, except that he could be more chatty. That was probably due to the Army. He had done four years with the Signals.

The smouldering Eb told him what had happened. "Ah'd give a lot to get square with yon two. Ay."

Tom nodded, and thought on and off about it for hours. By late evening he had an answer. He put it to his father, and Eb chuckled himself to sleep.

It was George Royds who first noticed Eb's subsequent and curious change of habit. With nothing to do, George could afford to attend every hound-trail for long miles around. What puzzled him was to see Eb at every trail—Eb, who had always run his fell farm conscientiously to the calendar and the weather.

"What's tha doing?" he asked half a dozen times.

Every time Eb merely smiled and said: "Ah'm taking things a bit easier."

It was a queer, unsatisfactory reply. More puzzling still was Eb's peculiar behaviour. On every occasion, with the trail started, and the bookies still bawling the odds, he would retire to his ramshackle car parked on the edge of the ground and seemingly take no further interest. People began to say that old Eb and his son had both gone daft.

They hadn't. They were saner than a lot of us. They were biding their time, and it came at the Lensingham trails. Trimmer was running, at the tight odds of seven to two on. Most of them were outsiders at twenty to one. George, watching closely, noticed that Eb, as usual, made no bet.

At three o'clock prompt the trail-hounds were rippling away from the start-line.

As usual, Eb sauntered back to his car. At twenty-one minutes past three Eb reappeared. He trudged across to the bookies, even now offering odds. He fished out five one-pound notes and handed them to Joe Spilch.

"Mercury," he said, "a win."

Joe gaped. Mercury was twenty to one, and hadn't a hope. But he took the money and gave Eb that seagull look, plus a hint of contempt.

At twenty-five minutes past three an off-white dog with a brown head appeared. Trimmer came at least a hundred yards behind. For once that rare event, the winning outsider, was defeating all the prophets.

Joe Spilch swore. Mercury's owner screamed his head off, and held out an encouraging titbit. Mercury won easily, and honestly.

Eb went over to the Spilch brothers with his ticket. "One hundred an' five pounds."

They looked at each other and bit their lips and paid out. They could do nothing else.

Eb returned to his car and drove off. A mile along the dale road he stopped, and presently Tom appeared descending from the direction of Mart Slack ridge. He was wearing a rucksack on his back.

He grinned and said: "Satisfied?"

"Ay. Taken time, it has. But ah knew t'would coom reet in end."

Tom got into the car, took off the rucksack, and pulled out of it a neat, box-like affair with a W.D. marking. Another was resting on the back seat of the car. They were walkie-talkie sets he had improperly looted on leaving the Army. It had been so easy for him to stay tucked away on high and tell his father, sitting in the car on the trail-ground, the name of the leading dog ten minutes from the end.

Tom patted the set on his lap. "Might make more money at trails wi' these."

Eb shook his head severely. "Nay, t'wouldn't be reet."

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Blunderers

SOME people believe a man is damned by the faults he commits. I don't agree. The errors a man makes don't matter half as much as the way he behaves *after* he has made them.

A man who blunders is not necessarily a fool. It depends on whether he learns from his mistake and applies the lesson in his future conduct—or lets it sour the rest of his life.

None of us can escape experience, but the way we react to it will either ripen our wisdom or rot our moral fibre.

"I survived that trouble, so likewise may I survive this one." That ancient saying can't be beaten as a spur to endeavour.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

Are we pampering the children?

by HERBERT HODGE

RUNNING OVER in my mind the life-stories of some of my friends for an overseas talk on Londoners, the other week, I was struck by the fact that the men and women whose courage, kindness and ability I admired most were those who'd had the hardest life as children. It set me wondering whether we are doing the best we can for the children of today.

Are we right in thinking, as so many of us do, that the easier we can make life for the children, the better the chance they will have of growing up into first-rate men and women?

Clumps On The Ear

When I read what the experts say nowadays about a child's need for complete security, and the terrible things that may happen to his mind if he doesn't feel secure, I wonder how a good many children of my own generation ever managed to grow up at all.

There was no school milk in those days; no school meals, no school buses; sometimes not even shoes for our feet. For the poorest ones, there was little or no regular medical attention, and no kindly official to safeguard us from having to do a job of work before and after school.

About the only things we got free were clumps on the ear. Yet, somehow, we managed to survive.

It's natural, of course, for us to want to give our children a happier life than we had. But are we really making them happier by making things easier? Aren't we overdoing it, and making life seem too easy?

Best Learnt Early

For instance, take that free milk. Is it better for a growing boy to have the stuff handed out to him as if it dropped readymade from the sky, or is it better for him to have to earn it first, by doing a job of some kind before school. (I'm not concerned with the milk in particular. I'm simply putting it forward as an illustration.)

One thing's certain. He'll get nothing free when he grows up. If he doesn't earn it himself, someone else will have to earn it for him. And the older we grow before we begin to learn this lesson, the harder it is for us to grasp. The younger we are, the easier it comes.

I think this must be the reason why people who've had a hard childhood so often do well in later life. They've had to overcome so many hardships in early life that nothing afterwards ever quite gets them down.

They can always say to themselves: "I've tackled things as bad as this before, and I've come through. So I can probably do it again."

Whereas, to the man or woman who's had an easy childhood and never had to take a risk, the same bit of trouble is liable to seem overwhelming. They tend to tackle it half-heartedly — defeated almost before they begin.

I live in a country district, where the schoolchildren are supplied with a special bus. It's nice to see a busload of happy children travelling up the road in really luxurious comfort—no matter how much or how little their fathers earn.

But I can't help wondering which kind of boy will make the better (and happier) man—the boy who has to walk a mile or so to school and harden himself to all weathers, or the boy who is carried backwards and forwards like a delicate flower in an upholstered glass case.

Of course, it's a great relief for parents to know the child's being taken such care of. But is it quite fair to the child? Sooner or later, he'll have to walk on his own two feet. What's he going to do then?

For years we've been saying, and quite rightly, that the poor child should be given the same opportunities as the rich one. But where we go wrong, I think, is in imagining that an easy life offers the child more opportunities for self-development than a hard one.

We tend to forget that, even in the bad old days, the rich boy was seldom mollycoddled. While the poor boy was being toughened in the rough-and-tumble of the workaday world, earning a few shillings towards the family expenses, the rich boy was being similarly toughened in the rough-and-tumble of his public school.

Never Grow Up

Of the two forms of toughening, I'm glad I got mine the easier way—as a baker's errand-boy instead of a public school "fag." But we've all got to get this toughening somehow. If we don't, we never really grow up. We remain children all our lives; forever trying to shunt our responsibilities on to somebody else. When big decisions need to be taken, or important things to be done, it's never up to us. It's always up to "them." "Why don't *they* do something?"

We never know the intense joy of a personal victory because we've never dared to risk the intense pain of a personal defeat. We sit there helpless, neither coming nor going, neither victorious nor defeated, neither dead nor alive—but just gradually slipping back.

What frightens me is the thought that, with the best intentions in the world, we may be preparing this kind of existence for our children.

A Finer Specimen

The problem, as I see it, is to find a way of providing for the child's bodily and mental needs without at the same time weakening his *spiritual* capacity to think and act for himself.

Or am I wrong about all this?

Most of the official experts tell us that the average modern child is a better specimen of humanity, mentally and physically, than his parents were at his age. And so he may be—on paper.

The question is—have we yet learned how to measure the capacity of the human *spirit* on paper? If not, perhaps we ought to start thinking out this whole problem of a child's education from the beginning again.

MY LIFE (9)
by WILFRED PICKLES

Wilfred and Mabel. "There's a saying: 'The road to success is crowded with women pushing husbands along'"

I have to choose—big money or security

On tour I'm thrilled interviewing ordinary folks at the mike. B.B.C. rebukes me for doing shows on the side. I face up to a big decision

ALTHOUGH OUR RETURN to the North was by way of a home-coming, it heralded big changes in our way of life and my career.

During my stay in London I had become known in the studios for my north country stories, and a humorous streak had been growing in me ever since I had done variety work with Richard North. I had noticed it in my *Two's a Crowd* shows with Jack Train and in the interviewing of the comedians in *Kingpins of Comedy*.

Having made a stir as a news reader, I decided that the time was ripe, while my name was fairly fresh in the public mind, to approach John Sharman, the veteran producer of *Music Hall*, about a chance in his show. I telephoned him and pointed out that I had a fund of Lancashire and Yorkshire tales which I had collected since boyhood.

"I'm sure I can string a good script together," I told him. And I put in a reminder that, as I was a member of the B.B.C. staff, my appearance would cost nothing.

John promised to give me a spot, but before I went to Bangor (the B.B.C.'s secret wartime hideout which nearly everybody knew about) to take part in *Music Hall*, I had to visit Wales as "Billy Welcome." On this occasion it was Cardiff and we did the programme from the Seamen's Hospital.

It is common to hear rude things said about the Welsh, but I am writing about them as I have known them. They have many of the qualities of the Lancastrian and the Yorkshireman—the grit, the stubbornness, the pride and the friendliness. I think South Wales would be one of the best places to be left penniless and hungry; one would soon be full!

The Broody Hen

I heard a lot of good stories from these sturdy, lively folk, most of whom have grown up in conditions far from being the most likely to stimulate a sense of humour. One that amused me tremendously was about a certain Dai Jones, who had a broody hen.

With the hen under his arm he called at the local general store kept by Mrs. Williams. "What do you want, Dai?" she asked, to which Dai replied: "Have you any nice new laid eggs?"

"No," she replied, "but I have some lovely tomatoes."

"Damn," said Dai, "they're no use to me; it's a broody hen I've got here, not a broody greenhouse."

Some of the best programmes I have ever done have sprung out of the people of Wales, and for me one of the most moving things in the world is to hear them singing "Land of my Fathers."

I found I was learning a lot about ordinary people as I travelled from one end of these islands to the other. All over the country there was a quiet resolve to see things through and an astonishing confidence in victory, astonishing because it was always there, however adverse the news might be.

Although I was so struck by the high morale of the people, it was what they said spontaneously before a microphone that intrigued and excited me, and I was also astounded at the popularity of the programmes.

People liked to hear what the man down the street or the woman with the basket in the shopping queue thought about things; and even in those dark days with the tide of war still running against us, the depression in the headlines was certainly not to be found in the hearts and minds of the British public.

Whenever I did a programme from a factory or workshop, I was usually approached by representatives of the management, who tried to push on to me their foremen or managers.

I didn't want them. I wanted the man with the spanner and the dirty overalls; the man with the grouse.

He made much better radio; and that apart, I realized that the only way to get things right was to hear what the grouser had to say. Whether he was completely wrong or not, he had a point of view, and telling it gave him the inclination to see the other point of view, whereas he had only been able to see his own.

It is a principle I have always observed in my microphone meetings with Mr. and Mrs. Britain. A lot of the grousers in this world are suffering from an inferiority complex more than anything else and to allow them to get their views off their chests is to make them less disgruntled and more charitable.

It was during a busy spell of programme work that John Sharman finally fitted me into one of his *Music Hall* productions. There were six artists on the bill and John made a most generous gesture by placing me fifth in order of appearance, an advantageous position: there is nothing so unenviable as to be first.

What Would Critics Do?

As I had only spoken to John on the telephone, I was interested to discover how different he was from the image I had from listening to his programmes and what I had heard of him from colleagues in London.

I noticed how nervous he was, and what a way this wiry little man had with the artists. He had them with him from the start and was obviously easy to work with.

Nobody could have improved on *Music Hall*. It has been under regular criticism for as long as I can remember, but the critics have offered no constructive suggestions as to how it might be improved.

The acts never existed to sustain the show at a higher level of attainment. The comedians have rarely been purely broadcasting artists.

As I looked at John Sharman I thought what a tough job he had in trying to find artists who in turn had to scratch about for new material after a busy week on the halls in different parts of the country. It was all very well for the singers: they only had to tell the audience they were going to sing "Annie Laurie" to reap applause.

But the poor comedians were treated differently, for if they started to tell the story about the two men in a pub and how one turned to the other and asked: "Weren't you in my class at school?" the response would be a groan.

I have often warned comedians who have made a hit on a *Music Hall* programme about accepting a second chance too quickly. "You're making a mistake," I have told them. "While radio can make you, it can also break you."

A song can be given scores of times over the air before the public tire of it, but a gag once told on the radio is dead.

Norman Wooland announced me as "the man who has recently read the news," and went on: "Here he is in a new rôle." I got a really warming reception from the audience and my

stories, it seemed, went down well with the listeners.

The after-effects of my initiation as a radio comedian did not end with fan-mail and praises from my B.B.C. colleagues: practically every agent in London wrote suggesting that if I could continue to turn out the sort of material I had used in my spot on *Music Hall*, there was a chance for me on the variety stage.

I was overwhelmed by this rush for my services. The agents were representatives of a world that was a mystery to me, although one name was familiar.

Soon after my spell of news reading I had visited Tommy Trinder in his dressing-room at a London theatre and we had not been talking more than five minutes when he surprised me by saying: "You ought to be doing some Sunday concerts, you know. Everybody knows your name now."

Tommy adjusted his loud tie in front of the mirror, grimaced at me as I looked at his reflection, and then skipped off, calling over his shoulder: "I won't be a minute. Hold on."

It turned out he had gone to call his manager, Jan Ralphini. When he arrived, Tommy said: "Ring Eddie Jones, will you, Jan? Tell him he should use Wilfred Pickles."

While Jan was telephoning Eddie Jones, a concert agent, Tommy said: "Not for less than thirty guineas a concert! Remember!"

Thirty guineas! How could I possibly forget? I made a quick comparison with the £480 a year I had been getting from the B.B.C. and the more recent £800 as a news reader.

So it came about that on my free Sundays in London I told stories at concerts all over the city; and even when I returned to Manchester Eddie Jones continued booking me. The money came as a boon to Mabel and me, for the cost of living in the heart of London had left nothing over from my salary.

Indeed, it was so welcome that I undertook an engagement in Cardiff which meant that I had to travel there from Manchester on an early-morning train and return overnight for duty at the studios on the Monday morning.

I Couldn't Believe It!

It was Eddie Jones who suggested to a variety agent, Lew Grade, that I might have an act that was good enough for the music halls. Lew Grade wrote to me and eventually telephoned and asked if we could come to some arrangement.

I pointed out that the only free period I had was my week's leave from the B.B.C. and he promptly agreed to book me for that week. "And now there's the money question," he said. "What about £75 for the week?"

It seemed an awful lot of money. I was astounded. I was still rather incredulous about the whole thing when I told Mabel all about it afterwards and we worried and wondered about the sort of world we were going into where £75 a week was talked about as if the pounds were shillings.

We also conjectured with some anxiety what sort of reception I would get on the music hall stage and as we travelled to Middlesbrough Empire this was uppermost in our minds, though we were pretending to each other that we were not in the least bit concerned.

I had learned from the comedians I had met that Middlesbrough audiences could be tough and hard to please. As we walked off the station we saw the posters prominently carrying my name at the top of the bill. And how we laughed when we saw the words below: "Wilfred Pickles, B.B.C.'s Ace Announcer!"

While I was keen to make it a successful week, I had no illusions about the music hall as a career, and I reflected

Tommy Trinder: "Mabel and I were flabbergasted when he said I should insist on much more than £75 a week for touring the halls"

fondly about my safe, secure job with the Corporation. I was now back on my salary of £480 a year, but at least it was solid.

Lew Grade told me months later how he sat in fear and trembling as he thought what a chance he had taken: my appearance meant much more to his nervous system than it did to mine.

On the Saturday night he came up to Middlesbrough with my pay, delighted because my turn had gone over well. I had never felt so wealthy.

Perhaps Lew knew what I was thinking, for he suggested I should leave the B.B.C. "I'll pay you £75 a week for a tour of the halls," he tempted.

I was all for leaping at the offer, but before I could say a word Mabel shook her head. I could see she was not at all satisfied and was trying hard to find her bearings in this world of variety where, it seemed, the impossible could happen without a flicker of emotion from anybody.

Somehow I knew instinctively that Mabel was right again, that her shrewdness had kept us off the wrong course. "Give us a week or two to think about it," she told Lew. She had other ideas in mind.

I Was On The Mat

The Press publicity about my appearance at Middlesbrough inevitably came to the notice of John Coatman, and I was ready for anything after Bob Reid telephoned me at the theatre and said: "You're going to be in for it when you come back!"

As I expected, immediately I reappeared in the studios on the following Monday morning I was told that Mr. Coatman wanted to see me.

Even in that moment I conceded that John was only carrying out his duties and as I went up to his desk he came to the point right away. "You have broken your contract. You know that. It's up to me to decide whether to dispense with your services or, alternatively, to claim for the Corporation the money you earned last week."

He hurled his fountain pen across his large blotter and swivelled round in a quick movement so that he was sitting almost parallel with the desk. Then he looked straight at me. "How much did you earn?" he asked.

For a moment I wondered what I ought to say. So I told John the truth, and, picking up his pen again, he said: "Ah well, we'll forget it this time. But don't let it happen again." With that he signalled that the interview was over.

I told Mabel about this short interview and grew lyrical about John's qualities and temperament. Mabel had something to tell me, too. She revealed for the first time just what she had in mind in that Middlesbrough dressing-room when Lew Grade had made his offer.

"The best thing is for us to go to London and see Tommy Trinder," she said. "He knows everything about this business and he'll be able to tell us what we should do."

I was up to the eyebrows in programme work and could not get the time to make the trip, so Mabel went alone. And Tommy's reaction to the offer really shook both of us.

Mabel telephoned me to report that Tommy had advised that we should insist on much more than we had been offered! I was flabbergasted.

"That's what he says," Mabel replied.

She then went off to see Lew Grade and told him what she had in mind. She believed in my ability and put so much faith in Tommy Trinder's counsel that she walked out of Lew's office without reaching agreement.

Many other agents had written to me after my spot in John Sharman's show, so we decided to try one of them.

I don't know why we selected Julius Darewski, unless it was because of the pleasing tone of his letter or the fact that I remembered his brother Herman and his orchestra playing for so many years at Bridlington. But we made up our minds to see him and we went to London on a glorious February morning in 1943.

We walked past the bookshops on Charing Cross Road, and below Wyndham's Theatre I noticed the variety artists strolling up and down the pavements in the vain hope that they would meet somebody who would give them a job. They stood out because of their casual manner, which contrasted so sharply with the purposeful movements of the rest of the people on this "roadway of romance."

On such a crisp morning it was hard to imagine that anything could go wrong. The sun shone, the air was clear, and London seemed fresh and invigorating, just as it always does on spring days.

But as we entered Julius Darewski's office at No. 18, I hoped I would never be found in the same position as those seemingly lost characters who pathetically pushed themselves under the noses of the agents and impresarios. They seemed peculiarly to be on the very edge of life.

Again I referred mentally to the security of the B.B.C. and recalled the great friendliness of John Coatman, who had so much faith in me as a broadcaster.

Julius Darewski began by praising my performance in *Music Hall*, but I soon made it clear there was not to be a long preamble to our talk by saying pointedly: "This will be a very big step for us, Mr. Darewski — if we take it! What can you offer me?"

And he replied briskly: "I can put you in for a season at the Blackpool Opera House with George Black, and following that a tour of the music halls, and at Christmas I can contract you for pantomime with Tom Arnold."

Mabel was still cautious, though. "Who is going to look after Wilfred's interests while he is in these shows? And what's going to happen afterwards?" she asked.

"Afterwards!" Julius drummed the edge of his desk with his fingertips. "Mrs. Pickles," he said, "you don't realize you have got a diamond here."

"I know I have," Mabel shot back. "But I want to make sure the diamond is in its right setting!"

Julius grinned and I roared with laughter at Mabel's directness, and the Chinese proverb flashed through my mind: "The road to success is crowded with women pushing their husbands along."

We Signed The Contract

After a lot of discussion we signed a contract and Mabel and I walked out into Charing Cross Road. We stood on the footpath not knowing which way to go. "Well?" said Mabel.

"Let's go and have a coffee," I said.

With rehearsals scheduled to start at Blackpool in May and a month's notice due to the B.B.C. I decided to tell John Coatman immediately about the step I had taken.

For a second he looked thoughtful as he rubbed his cupped hand across his jaw. Then very quietly, he said: "Well, perhaps you're right."

He hesitated before going on to say: "Remember one thing, Wilfred, if this job turns out to be a failure, come back to me and I will always find you a job!"

It was a remark so characteristic of John Coatman and one which few people in this world would have made under the same circumstances. He put his hand on my shoulder and, lapsing into northern dialect, said: "Another thing. Let t'missus look after t'brass!"

NEXT WEEK: Back to Blackpool —top of the bill

HANGOVER HOUSE

by SAX ROHMER

ILLUSTRATED BY SEABRIGHT

The dead man's last accusing words had been: "La. . . . It was La. . . ."
What had he been trying to say? Suddenly, Kennedy knew the answer

Hilary said: "What do you mean by 'what happened here last night'?" Kennedy said: "Just what I say"

STORM KENNEDY, private detective, is commissioned by Lord Glengale to watch his daughter, Lady Hilary Bruton, whom he fears is being blackmailed. Learning that Hilary and her aunt "Elfie" Elphinstowe (with whom she lives) are going to an all-night party at Hangover House, a dilapidated country mansion, Kennedy goes too.

He has not been there more than a few minutes when Hilary comes rushing in from a terrace, and shortly afterwards the body of a man is discovered on the terrace, stabbed by a curious Oriental dagger.

The police are called, and no one is allowed to leave. After a restless night in the house, the guests are interrogated next morning by Chief Inspector McGraw and Sergeant Sample of Scotland Yard.

The guests are Hilary, Elfie, Peter Faraway (husband of the hostess, who left in a huff when Peter began flirting with another girl), Sidonia (a dance band singer), Mrs. Muller (a beautiful foreigner), Allen Lovelace (a shy song writer), Mohammed (an Egyptian), and Kennedy himself. The occupier of the house (which he lets out for parties) is an irascible ex-major, Larkhall Pike.

A curious gold object, shaped like a pen, left among the stabbed man's effects on a table beside the body, is stolen from his room. Kennedy finds this in a summer-house, after talking to Hilary, and it comes to light when he is searched.

In an effort to divert attention from Hilary, he mentions to McGraw that Sidonia, too, had been in the summer-house. McGraw orders Sidonia to be brought in—and it is then discovered that she has escaped from the house.

Meanwhile, aware that there is some sort of collusion between Kennedy and Hilary, McGraw interrogates them together. They are interrupted by someone coming down the stairs. It is the "dead" man. He gasps: "It was La . . ." and then collapses. Hilary bursts out: "Geoff!"

PART VII

Spotlight On Sidonia

A CAR which long ago had earned honourable retirement on the scrap heap came noisily to rest outside the Effingham Arms, an inn itself a shadow of former splendour, four miles north of King's Riding. The driver scrambled down and stepped back to talk to his passenger.

"Shan't be two minutes, dear."

He turned to go, but a shapely arm shot out from a sable cape and a firm hand seized his loose tweed jacket.

"Take it slow, Jimmy! What goes on? Do you *want* the cops to grab me, or have you got a pain?"

"Neither, Sidonia. But I tell you I won't be two minutes."

Jimmy, a puffy young man whose face and figure were a warning to elbow-lifters, stared angrily through black-rimmed glasses but couldn't shake off that tenacious grip.

"Then you're plain nuts. Do I have to tell you we're being trailed—or are you aiming at a reward? London is where we're going, and if you think I'm going to sit out on the street——"

"Listen, dear. Nobody'll see you. Nobody ever stops here. Better still, come on in and have a drink while——"

"If I get out of this hearse it won't be to have a drink. It'll be to attend your funeral."

Jimmy wrenched himself free.

"Put a cork in it," he advised, politely.

Turning, he ran up the steps which led to the saloon of the Effingham Arms, jerked the door open and went in.

A stout landlady presiding over an empty bar stood up as he appeared.

"Why! Mr. Findlater! Haven't seen you

for—well, I don't know how long it's been."

"Haven't been down this way, Mrs. Sprigg. Double Scotch. Could I use the phone in your back room?"

"With pleasure, Mr. Findlater. Go in. I'll bring you your drink."

"Much obliged."

And Mr. Findlater, who evidently knew the house, opened a door which faced the entrance and seated himself at a phone on a side table in a small, stuffy sitting-room.

PULLING a notebook from his pocket, he anxiously scanned its pages, and began to dial a number.

Mrs. Sprigg entered and set a glass and a bottle of sodawater beside him, retiring as quietly as she had come in.

A sound of voices, raised in the adjoining bar, interrupted Mr. Findlater. He replaced the receiver and sat there listening. An expression of anxiety became one of outright terror as he gathered the nature of the conversation. Hurriedly replacing his notebook and swallowing his Scotch straight, he crossed the little room to another door, opened it, and looked out into a passage.

There was a staircase on the right, and on the left a private entrance from a side street. He went left, and began very cautiously to open the door. He saw no one in the street, and therefore stepped out.

He was still holding the knob when a heavy hand fell on his shoulder.

A policeman had been standing against the wall.

"Your name Findlater?"

He twisted round and confronted a six-foot athlete whose face was principally composed of jaw.

"It is. What about it?"

"The inspector will tell you what about it. Come and see."

He was led, gently but firmly, round the corner to the front of the Effingham Arms. His veteran Buick no longer lingered alone. A police car stood just behind it, and another policeman stood beside the car.

"Here he is," Findlater's captor announced. "Get the inspector."

But before this second constable could obey, the side door of the inn banged noisily, and a plainclothes officer came running round to join them.

"I've got him, sir!"

The inspector pulled up. He, also, was a big man. (Superintendent Croker prided himself upon the physique of the King's Riding police.)

"Trying to slip away again, were you?" he said, unpleasantly. "That makes it worse. Don't waste time. Where is she?"

"Look here, Inspector——"

"And don't try bluster with *me*. Where is she?"

Findlater pointed, vaguely, to his car.

"Trying to be funny?" The inspector came a step closer. "Where did you drop her?"

"I don't know what you're talking about. I didn't drop her. I left her out there!"

The inspector wrenched open a door of the police car: "Get in!" he barked.

A few minutes later, news of the arrest of James Findlater, and of the unaccountable disappearance of Sidonia, came across the wire to Hangover House, interrupting a scene *á trois* between McGraw, Sample and Storm Kennedy. When he had listened to the report from King's Riding, McGraw directed:

"Bring him back here." Then he hung up.

The faded velvet drapes were open wide. Sunlight mercilessly revealed the untidy dilapidation of Larkhall Pike's study. Shadow had lent its many relics a mystic quality. Seen now, they merely looked their age.

McGraw glanced aside at Sergeant Sample. "Followed that?" he asked.

"Yes, sir—up to a point."

"Findlater admits he's an old acquaintance of this woman's, but holds that he didn't know there was anything against her. Swears he can't account for her disappearance."

"Then why," Kennedy broke in, "did he help her to escape? Does he say?"

"He says he planned to climb the wall and try to find somebody to interview. Found Sidonia; had known her a long time. Claims he fell for it to pick up the story and pull off a scoop for the *Evening Herald*. D'you think he's lying?"

"Yes," said Sample, pronouncing the word as if it had been a reluctant sentence of death. "I think he's lying."

"Whose little boy would you *expect* me to be?"

"I hope they find her." Kennedy spoke in a low voice.

"So do I," McGraw drawled, "for your sake."

"Why for *my* sake?"

McGraw uncoiled himself from his chair, and walked round to lean back against the desk.

"Going to have trouble with your present assignment, aren't you? You don't know what link, if any, there is between her and the missing woman, but your client is in this thing up to her neck. Speaking in everybody's interests, Mr. Kennedy, what about a straight showdown?"

KENNEDY said pleasantly: "Such as, for instance, how a dead man comes to life."

"I thought you'd try that line," McGraw declared. "Charge of murder inadmissible?"

"Not what I was thinking about. That's a nice point for the lawyers. I had in mind Lady Hilary's pretending that she didn't know the man."

"Not what *I* was thinking about. I had in mind that Lady Hilary must have run into this room directly after the attack took place and switched the light off."

"It certainly looks like that."

"Do you know it to be a fact?"

"No. But I suspect it to be. She has admitted switching off the light, but not when this occurred."

Storm Kennedy was putting in some hard, swift thinking—for he clearly foresaw the next question. Hilary, whose composure had crumbled when the "dead" man had staggered downstairs, remained in another room recently unlocked by McGraw's orders, in the charge of Elfie. The chief inspector was prepared to wait.

But that stifled cry of "Geoff" had hopelessly betrayed her. She would be compelled, now, to reveal the man's name. It was useless to prevaricate further.

"Any suspicions, Mr. Kennedy, about the victim's identity?"

Here it was. . . .

"Yes." Kennedy spoke quietly. "On a former occasion, when this point came up, I didn't know the man's name, and said so. But Lady Hilary's use of the word 'Geoff' has confirmed what was merely a surmise. The dead man (for the hospital report makes it clear, I believe, that he's really dead now) was Geoffrey Arlington, the celebrated, or rather, notorious, traveller and explorer."

"Ever seen him before?"

"Never."

"Then how do you know?"

McGraw's drawl had become more pronounced. But his fawn eyes were wide open.

Kennedy said quickly: "His name was mentioned when I accepted the assignment."

McGraw nodded, with half-closed eyes.

"Glad you're not holding out on me. I've had Lord Glengale on the line. He told me he'd employed you, but didn't tell me any more. He's on his way down, now. Did you get the name from his lordship?"

"Yes."

"In what connection was it mentioned?"

"Lord Glengale believed that she had got herself involved in financial difficulties. He believed that her troubles were due to undesirable acquaintances, and he named a number of those whom he suspected. Geoffrey Arlington was one of the names he mentioned to me."

"Can you think of any others, Mr. Kennedy?" Sample asked, looking up from his notebook.

"None whose name was Geoff."

There was a brief silence and then:

"Bit of a coincidence, though," McGraw remarked dryly.

"Undoubtedly. But so is the disappearance of Sidonia."

"Any evidence that Sidonia knew this man?"

"None. But I consider her behaviour to be more than suspicious."

"Is that so? What do you consider Lady Hilary Bruton's behaviour to be?"

"Difficult to explain. But I believe she can explain it."

"I hope she can. What's more, she'll have to." McGraw turned to Sample. "Call headquarters for everything on Geoffrey Arlington."

Sample nodded and took up the phone. Storm Kennedy ignored a monotonous monologue which followed and concentrated on this maddening problem.

But, try as he might, he couldn't get his ideas into focus. Was Sidonia really involved in the case? If so, she must be a consummate actress He had decided already that Hilary's mis-statements might be explained by her anxiety to conceal the connection (whatever this might be) between herself and Arlington. If, shortly after a secret meeting, some person at present not identified had attempted the man's murder, Hilary's anxiety would have grown greater.

Could this person be Sidonia?

Presently he spoke in a low voice (Sample was busy on the phone):

"Sidonia's real name, I seem to recall, is Julia Sidney. Therefore, she can't be the person whom Arlington tried to indicate."

McGraw's sleepy regard was turned upon him.

"Thinking of the words, 'It was La . . .'?"

"I am, yes."

MCGRAW drawled: "So am I. Not forgetting Sidonia may have a pet name. Other La's are Larkhall Pike and Lahùn."

McGraw closed his eyes completely, and then:

"Did you ever hear of a tailor called Simon Artz, Mr. Kennedy?" he asked.

"I know the firm. Don't know if they do tailoring," Kennedy confessed. "But they sell reach-me-downs of all sorts. Everything else as well. Why?"

"Arlington was wearing a jacket with that label."

Kennedy sat up.

"Then he had come from Port Said in all probability."

"Is that so? Link with Egypt, again."

"What's the other link, Chief Inspector?"

McGraw paused for a moment before replying.

"Other link—" he seemed to be thinking of something else—"is an enamel, or cloisonné, necklace which Mr. Pike has identified as late eighteenth Theban, whatever that may mean. Found fifty yards from the terrace—with Arlington's fingerprints on it. Signs of a woman's high heels there, but when the grass was cut back, could make nothing of them. . . ."

Storm Kennedy had not left the study more than two minutes when Inspector Hawley rapped on the door, opened it, and announced:

"Mr. Horace Merlin, from King's Riding."

Mr. Merlin came in—a tall, thin man. He had the face, and the manners, of a comedian. He wore a chessboard jacket and flannel trousers.

"At your service, gentlemen. What

Continued on page 24

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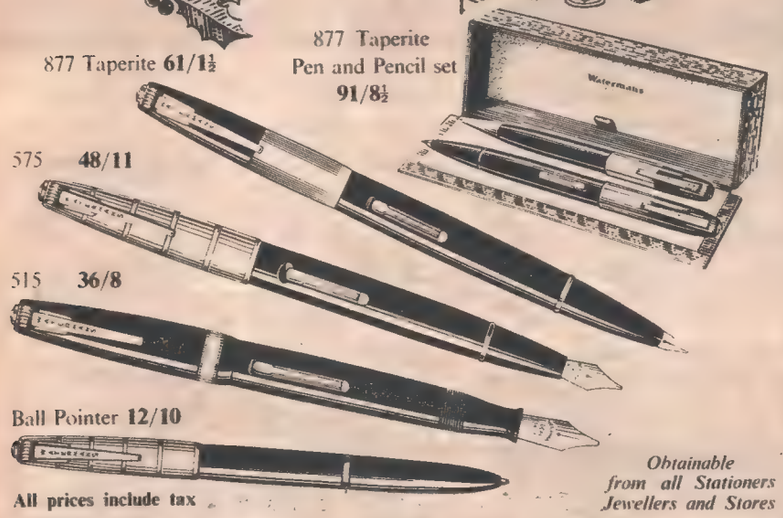

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HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from page 22

can Merlin do for you?" Something in McGraw's look silenced him.

McGraw said: "You the magician? Try and open this." He handed him the gold object.

The magician laid it in the palm of a large hand and studied it closely. He pulled, twisted and shook. The case remained obstinately shut.

He took a pair of glasses from a pocket of his jacket, adjusted them and bent to peer at the puzzle. He moved it gently with long, sensitive fingers as it lay in his large palm. He finally inspected the flat end; then, suddenly:

"Eureka!" he exclaimed, and held the thing aloft in theatrical triumph. The gold cap hung loose on its chain.

"Put it down here!"

"Certainly. Shall I first reclose it—and challenge Scotland Yard?"

"No. Send the account to me. Good day, Mr. Merlin. Scotland Yard is obliged for your co-operation."

And when Horace Merlin, grinning and bowing, had gone, McGraw and Sample bent over the desk.

The chief inspector tipped out a glass object on to the blotting pad. Then, using a long ivory bodkin which he had found on Larkhall Pike's desk, he delicately explored the interior.

"Space down there for something else. But it's gone. Get Wilson with the fingerprint outfit. See what this is?" He pointed, but didn't touch. "Recently used. Still wet."

The object which had been concealed in the gold case was a hypodermic syringe.

STORM KENNEDY walked on, aimlessly. He had no particular goal in view, but just felt impelled to walk, and think.

Foremost in his mind was the approaching interview with Lord Glengale. What could he say to him? He had accomplished exactly nothing. Even without the additional clue afforded by Hilary's bloodstained handkerchief, evidence to justify her arrest was piling up formidably.

She had confessed to entering the study at a time which could only have been shortly after the attack on Arlington. Her action in switching off the light was capable of one explanation alone. She had wanted to avoid being seen.

The dead man had held some mysterious threat over her; had used it as an instrument of blackmail. This Glengale knew, and would be forced to admit.

But Kennedy obstinately refused to entertain the idea that Hilary had struck Arlington with a dagger.

What little he knew about Geoffrey Arlington he had learned from Lord Glengale and from a brief telephone conversation with a fellow clubman who, he happened to remember, had once spoken of meeting him. This, just before setting out from London.

Arlington was a world wanderer and explorer. He had lectured extensively and had published a number of books of travel. Latterly, he had lain under a cloud. There had been some scandal, details of which Kennedy's friend couldn't recall. But he knew that Arlington had been asked to resign from the Travellers and other clubs. . . . "In my opinion, Bill," he had summed up, "the fellow's a bit of a Baron Munchausen. I think he was caught out on his account of discoveries around the headwaters of the Amazon. Has a rotten name with women, too. Not a bad looker, and cashes in on it. . . ."

A rotten name with women. . . .

Clouds gathered to mock the promise of a sunny day. When he plunged, desperately, into the wilderness of overgrown shrubbery he grew aware of a darkening. Anxiety for Hilary became agonizing. Whatever her explanation, it could never amount to an alibi. If only he could see her, talk to her. If only he knew the *truth*.

One hope, and one hope only remained: discovery of the real culprit.

Those problematic words of the dying man undoubtedly held a clue.

La. . . .

If he had meant Larkhall Pike, surely he would have tried to say *Pike*? If he had meant Mohammed Ibn Lahûn,

then it seemed unlikely that he would have used the last name.

In either case, a woman must be involved, for it was a woman who had stolen the mysterious object found on the dead man.

And whoever had taken the gold case from beside Arlington's body had used some hand covering to avoid leaving fingerprints.

Kennedy was passing behind that rustic summer-house in which he had found the gold case. Through crannies in its crazy wall, outlined against light from the entrance, he had seen something move. Trying, consciously now, to retain his silent tread, he crept nearer. He peered inside, checking his breathing.

For what he saw there was dramatic, revealing, as a curtain rising on a scene wholly unexpected. . . .

HILARY and Elfie were sitting in an impressive antique bedroom. "Have a cigarette, dear," Elfie suggested, and held out a yellow packet. "I bought these from a policeman."

Hilary shook her head and smiled.

"What a grand pal you are, Elfie! Whatever should I have done without you?"

Elfie lighted a cigarette.

"You've always been able to play the fool, dear, without help from anybody. This little jamboree is your star turn, to date. If only you had counted ten instead of singing out 'Geoff!' "

"But, Elfie! It was . . . ghastly! How *can* a dead man come to life again? I thought it was his ghost."

"So did I. But I kept my mouth shut."

"Perhaps you were struck dumb?" Hilary suggested.

"I was! I'm only just recovering. It isn't that the truth wouldn't have had to come out, sooner or later. But you might have picked a better moment. What I mean is this: instead of confiding the facts to the discretion of Bill Kennedy—who is more than sympathetic—you are going to be carpeted by that terrifying C.I.D. man."

"But Bill would have had to tell him."

"No doubt. But Bill could have suppressed non-essential details. In fact, I'm sure he would have done."

Hilary didn't speak. After a minute, Elfie said, in exasperation, "Do you, darling, or don't you, realize that the police have a case against you which no mutton-headed jury could turn down?"

Hilary clasped her hands between her knees and stared at the worn carpet.

"I quite realize it, Elfie. And I don't care a bit. That's not what bothers me. All I'm worrying about is that I dragged *you* into this mess! Oh, Elfie darling!" Hilary moved so swiftly that she had crossed and was kneeling before the elder woman even as the words were spoken. "Say you forgive me! I'm so utterly miserable."

Elfie looked down, and cleared her throat. She said gruffly: I'm going to ring the bell—if there is one—and say, as a qualified nurse, that you are unfit for a police interview but would be ready to answer any questions put to you by Bill Kennedy, who we know is a friend."

Hilary pressed her face against Elfie's knees.

"That doesn't mean I shall have to tell him everything—yet?"

"Everything that happened last night."

"He is sure to ask about—Geoffrey."

"Say you were afraid of him. *Why* is nobody's business—except that you'll have to chance explaining it to any man you want to marry. Otherwise, tell Bill the whole story. Then, leave it to him to put the facts before Inspector McGraw. Shall I ring the bell?"

"Yes, darling." It was a small, smothered voice. "Ring the bell—if there is one. . . ."

Inside the house Chief Inspector McGraw was doodling on a blotter.

"Got the report on Arlington yet?" he asked Sergeant Sample.

"May take some time, sir. I don't think he's ever been on the books. But two other reports have come in."

"What are they?"

"One's from headquarters. The Hanover Square garage. Their line's out of order. One of our men called, and they told him the car standing down here at the back gate was hired, self-driven, by Geoffrey Arlington last night. He phoned for one. The manager knows him."

"Where did he phone from?"

"They can't say. He came in a taxi and picked up the car."

"What time?"

"Ten fifteen."

"Had a call posted for the taxi-driver?"

"Yes, sir."

McGraw sighed.

"Anything else?"

"Detective-officer Brayle, our department, arrested Sidonia ten minutes ago. She was going into the block of flats in Jermyn Street, where she lives. He had been waiting there."

"Whom was she with?"

"Sir Wilfred Willerton. Nothing known about him except that he's a second lieutenant in the Grenadier Guards. According to a statement made to Brayle, Willerton, on his way back from the coast, pulled up at the Effingham Arms for a drink. Sidonia jumped out of another car standing there and begged him to give her a lift to London. He's an admirer of hers. He agreed."

Sample had been reading, hesitantly, from his shorthand notes.

McGraw pondered this information.

"Is that so?" he remarked. "Any more good news?"

"Yes, sir. James Findlater is outside, under escort."

MCGRAW chewed in silence for quite a long time, and then: "Let him stay there," he drawled. "What explanation does the woman Sidonia offer?"

"Says she's on the air at two thirty. That a big engagement hangs on it."

"Pity. May ruin her career. Have you told them to hold her?"

"Yes, sir."

A rap on the door heralded the entrance of Inspector Hawley.

"I have a message from Lady Hilary Bruton, Chief Inspector," he announced. "Miss Elphinstowe states that Lady Hilary is still unfit for interrogation. But, knowing the importance of time, she would try to answer any questions put to her by Mr. Kennedy. I understand Mr. Kennedy is a personal friend."

Chief Inspector McGraw appeared to have fallen asleep, but presently he aroused himself.

"Get Mr. Kennedy," he instructed.

Inspector Hawley went out. McGraw glanced aside at Sample.

"Watching my step, Sergeant. We're getting on dangerous ground."

"Yes, sir."

When, ten minutes later, Storm Kennedy was ushered in by Hawley, he appeared as one rejuvenated. In spite of an unshaven chin, and dishevelled dress clothes, he looked like a winner of the Irish Sweepstake. His blue eyes were dancing.

"You seem to be on top of the world," McGraw commented dryly. "Got a clue?"

Kennedy sat down facing the chief inspector.

"I have learned never to jump to conclusions; and I know it's going to be hard to pin this thing on to the real culprit. . . . But I think I know who the real culprit is!"

"Is that so? I have a kind of notion I know, too."

"Have you? We can all make mistakes."

They were interrupted by the buzz of the phone. Sample took the call, listened, and scribbled busily.

"Hospital?" McGraw asked, as the sergeant put down the receiver.

Sample nodded.

"They say, yes. There's the mark of a recent injection on his left arm."

"Has the actual cause of death been decided yet?"

"No further report, sir. I believe they are waiting for a special opinion."

"Hope it isn't Dr. Smithy's. We ought to try to find a doctor who knows a dead man when he sees one."

"We were all agreed," Kennedy pointed out.

"We're not all doctors. Listen, Mr. Kennedy. I know what you're doing here, and who employed you. You were trying to shield Lady Hilary Bruton . . . don't interrupt. I've had experience of your methods. I grant you're good at the game. But it's one thing to grab the evidence of a robbery and stymie the C.I.D. It's another to try to cover up evidence of attempted homicide. A last word: I want you to go and talk to Lady Hilary."

"I shall be glad to do so."

THE chief inspector said dryly: "I know that. You've been waiting for a chance. But here's a friendly tip. I expect you to report to me *exactly* what she tells you. If it clears her, good enough. If I think you're doing any editing, I'll have her here on the mat, whoever's daughter she is."

"That's agreed," Kennedy said.

"Right. Get busy."

And the door had no more than closed behind Storm Kennedy when Hawley rapped on it again, stepped in, and announced:

"Lord Glengale, Chief Inspector."

Lord Glengale wore a neat check suit and a soft-collared white shirt with a regimental tie, very tightly knotted. The whole agile figure, the brown face, conveyed the same impression: tightly knotted. His uncompromising grey eyes were strangely like the eyes of Hilary when she was angry.

He stared across the room, as McGraw slowly stood up.

"Chief Inspector McGraw?"

"At your service, sir. This is my assistant, Detective-Sergeant Sample. Will you please take a seat."

Glendale sat down on the leather couch just inside the door.

"Where is my daughter?"

McGraw dropped back in his chair.

"At the moment, sir, with Miss Elphinstowe, upstairs. We all had a nasty shock a while ago."

The steely eyes of Lord Glengale never moved.

"Possibly you misunderstood me?"

"I understood you perfectly, sir. But your lordship knows the meaning of discipline as well as I do. At the first possible moment you shall see Lady Hilary. I am acting under orders from the Superintendent of my department. It's my duty to carry them out."

"Explain these orders."

McGraw leaned back.

"They relate to details connected

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THIS WEEK'S COVER

EVER since they first appeared in *John Bull* on August 3, 1946, Douglas L. Mays's Cover Kids have drawn more and more enthusiastic letters from readers. Their mischievous scrapes and gay adventures are just the sort of things which happen to most normal children.

"They have an immense appeal," writes Miss M. C. Jones, of 21 Midfield Avenue, Barnehurst, Kent. "They look so real. Every time I look at them, I could hug every one."

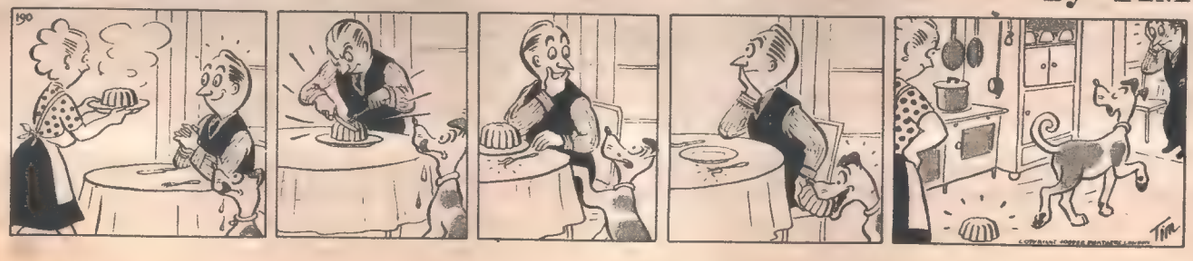
"Mays is a genius," says Mrs. Jean Ferguson, of 10 Braughton Avenue, Harehills, Leeds. "People who moan about the low standards of present-day art should start eating their words."

"Thanks for Mays's lovely covers," writes Miss Lilian Bailey, of 53 Sidney Road, London, E.7. "My boy friend and I are saving up to get married and I hope to have a family of four children. If they turn out to be little devils like those on the cover, I'll love them all the more."

This week, it's a wet Saturday afternoon at home. The Cover Kids couldn't think what to do with themselves. But mother and father finally hit on a solution. They got the whole gang settled down to a nice quiet game of cards. They thought.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



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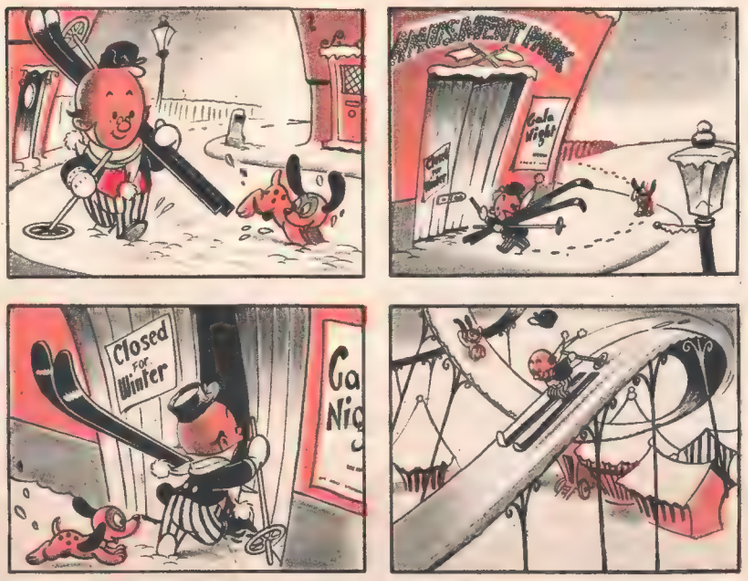
by David Hand



HANGOVER HOUSE

Continued from page 25

with the case which I must ask you to consider."

"Give me the details."

The chief inspector chewed reflectively. "A man called Geoffrey Arlington was stabbed here last night in highly mysterious circumstances. Lady Hilary first declared she didn't know him. Now, she's admitted she did. No one else present had ever met him."

Lord Glengale stood up and took a step forward.

"You are not daring to suggest to *me* that my daughter is the criminal?"

Sergeant Sample blew his nose.

"I'm suggesting nothing, sir. Merely answering your question. You see, there's evidence to show that Lady Hilary was probably the last person to see Arlington alive."

"What does *she* say?"

McGRAW said calmly: "So far, nothing. Mr. Storm Kennedy, with my permission, has gone to ask her for the real facts. While we're waiting, your lordship might be able to supply a few details about this man Arlington."

Lord Glengale returned to the couch and sat down again.

"The man was a blackguard. Bad as they come. Never met the fellow face to face. But I knew him by sight. Discovered by accident that he'd induced my daughter to put up capital for a wild-cat oil well in Arabia. Damn' oil well didn't exist! Absconded with the money. I could do nothing. Had his record looked up. Terrible! Fired from all his clubs. Rank outsider."

"Sounds like it," McGraw agreed. "How long ago was the oil deal?"

"Couple of years."

McGraw considered this.

"Anything to suggest the association had been renewed?" he inquired.

"Nothing definite. But, lately, my daughter's been gallivanting about with her Aunt Elfie——"

"Miss Elphinstowe?"

"Yes. I knew in my bones there was something going on. That was why I employed Storm Kennedy."

McGraw chewed a while. "Any suspicion, Lord Glengale, that Arlington may have been trying to blackmail Lady Hilary?"

"Quite capable of it."

"You knew he was in England?"

"Saw him! Nearly bumped into him in Knightsbridge, only yesterday."

"Knightsbridge," McGraw mused. "Was he alone?"

"Woman with him. Would be."

"See you?"

"He did not."

McGraw was silent for a while; then: "What I'm anxious to know, sir," he went on, "is: had he, to your own knowledge, any hold over Lady Hilary?"

"You mean, had she any motive for murdering him?"

"Merely anxious to learn the facts."

"Your attitude, Chief Inspector, is one of insufferable stupidity. I must decline to answer any further questions."

"That's for you to decide, sir."

"I have decided. I'll wait outside in my car. Perhaps you will be good enough to notify me when I have your permission to see my daughter."

Lord Glengale crossed to the door, jerked it open, and went out. As it banged behind him:

"Phew!" said McGraw. "Another case like this and I'm for chicken farming."

"Wouldn't suit your temperament," Sample assured him, and added: "while Lord Glengale was blowing off steam I got an idea. You've seen the marks Wilson found on that hypodermic syringe? Same as those on the case and the window frame. Kind of fine mesh. Now, it seems to me that nobody could use such a delicate thing as a syringe with a handkerchief wrapped round his fingers."

McGraw closed tired eyes.

"M'm. Might mean something."

There was a knock on the door.

Inspector Hawley came in.

"Mrs. Muller would like a word with you, Chief Inspector," he said.

"Send her in," McGraw drawled.

Mrs. Muller entered presently, her wrap discarded.

"Please sit down, Mrs. Muller."

She selected the chair facing the big desk and smiled.

"Please tell me, Inspector, if I am asking the impossible. But I suppose Mr. Lovelace has been allowed to go, and so I was wondering if there's any objection to my going, too? My driver has been waiting for hours, and really it *is* distressing to stay in evening dress all day!"

THE chief inspector returned her smile with one which had a quaint, unfamiliar charm of its own.

"I don't believe there's anything against it, Mrs. Muller. Glad you reminded me. Though we'll be sorry to lose your company. Any objection, Sergeant Sample, to letting Mrs. Muller go home?"

"No, sir. None that I know of."

McGraw turned again to Mrs. Muller.

"Staying in a London hotel, I remember. Don't live in England?"

"No, Inspector. My home is in Beirut. I expect to return in two weeks."

"Beirut? Things a bit disturbed in that area?"

Mrs. Muller's smile grew sad, and then faded.

"Unfortunately, yes. My husband, an engineer, is in oil—ghastly way of putting it! Makes him sound like a sardine!"

McGraw laughed and stood up.

"Goodbye, Mrs. Muller," he said. "No reason to hold you."

"That's very sweet of you. Thanks ever so much for your courtesy."

McGraw sat down again. And Mrs. Muller rejoined Hawley, who was waiting in the long passage.

"It's all right, Inspector. I am allowed to leave."

"Glad to hear it, madam."

"I'm just going to get my handbag and wrap. I wonder if you would be kind enough to ask my driver to bring the car into the courtyard? I haven't the courage to face all those reporters outside the gate!"

But Inspector Hawley had been standing beside the car for nearly ten minutes before Mrs. Muller, wrapped in her mink, appeared.

Her appearance aroused Lord Glengale from a savage reverie. Seated in the back of a Rolls sedan, he had been cursing under his breath so that even Binns, his chauffeur, had flinched. The dainty figure of Mrs. Muller diverted his ideas into a new channel.

He stared pointedly until Hawley opened the door for her; then, as the door was closed and the inspector went ahead to clear a path through hungry news-hunters:

"Do we know that lady, Binns?" he demanded.

"No, milord. Not to the best of my knowledge, that is."

"Queer. Thought we did. Ought to."

Meanwhile, in the antique bedroom Storm Kennedy smoked one of the cigarettes bought by Elfie from a policeman.

"Now that the crisis has come," he said, "I want to make my own position clear. I want you both to know that my arrival here was not an accident. I was called in by Lord Glengale to try to avert what happened here last night."

"Just what do you mean by 'what happened here last night'?" Hilary's voice was cold.

"Exactly what I say. I mean your meeting with Geoffrey Arlington."

Hilary's long lashes flickered, then veiled her eyes. She stood up and crossed to Storm Kennedy.

"Listen, Hilary, let me explain something else. I am here by permission of Chief Inspector McGraw. And I have passed my word that I will tell him *everything* that you tell *me*. The decision must rest with McGraw. So, do you mind Hilary, if *I* ask the questions and *you* answer them?"

"I should prefer it."

"You came to Hangover House to meet Geoffrey Arlington." Storm Kennedy spoke slowly, mustering his ideas. "You must have arranged this with him. Because he, I presume, had not been invited?"

"No. I didn't even know he was in England until he phoned me last night. I had not seen him for a year."

"You didn't want to see him. The meeting was forced upon you. Now, let me suggest (although I know, Hilary, it isn't the whole story) that he had used you in some way to float a shady transaction—used your money, too—and that he threatened to expose the facts to your father unless you did meet him. Is that true, as far as it goes?"

"Yes . . . as far as it goes."

Elfie broke in: "We were going away to try to stymie his game."

"Then you had anticipated his turning up?"

"He had written to say he was on the way," Elfie replied again. "Hilary wouldn't read his letters. . . . But *I* read 'em!"

"So you suggested a secret meeting here."

Hilary's hands moved restlessly.

"I thought there would be a crowd at Joan's party. I was here once before—to a garden fête—and I remembered the summer-house, and the back entrance. At ten o'clock last night I called him and made an appointment for twelve thirty. I thought I could slip out unnoticed. But he was late. I had given him up. He found his way to the house. I turned and saw him behind me."

"And what did you do?"

"Took him out into the garden. Down the slope, towards the back gate."

"How far, Hilary?"

"Oh, forty or fifty yards."

"And what happened?"

"He — Geoffrey — refused to believe what I told him. He tried to threaten me. That was where he made a mistake. I had in my bag the only present he had ever given me. It was an Egyptian necklace."

Kennedy's expression remained unchanged.

"I had brought it, wrapped in a handkerchief. I wanted no link, no memory, to recall the misery he had meant to me. When I told him to go I thrust the thing into his hand. This convinced him, I suppose, that I meant what I had said."

Hilary became silent. Her fingers were locked, now, between her knees. She was staring down at the faded French carpet.

SHE went on: "Then he tried to convince me that his life was in danger. He showed me a knife, which he'd got in Mecca. He swore that it was one of the holy relics, that it had belonged to the Prophet's wife. He declared that fanatics had followed him to England—had followed him here, to Hangover House. He claimed to be penniless."

"He wanted money?"

Hilary nodded, miserably.

"What did you say?"

"I said that I didn't care in the least *what* became of him. It was then that he grew violent, and—threatened me. I turned, and ran. Somehow, I got back to the terrace. He was running after me. I heard him call out, '*Larry! Larry!*'"

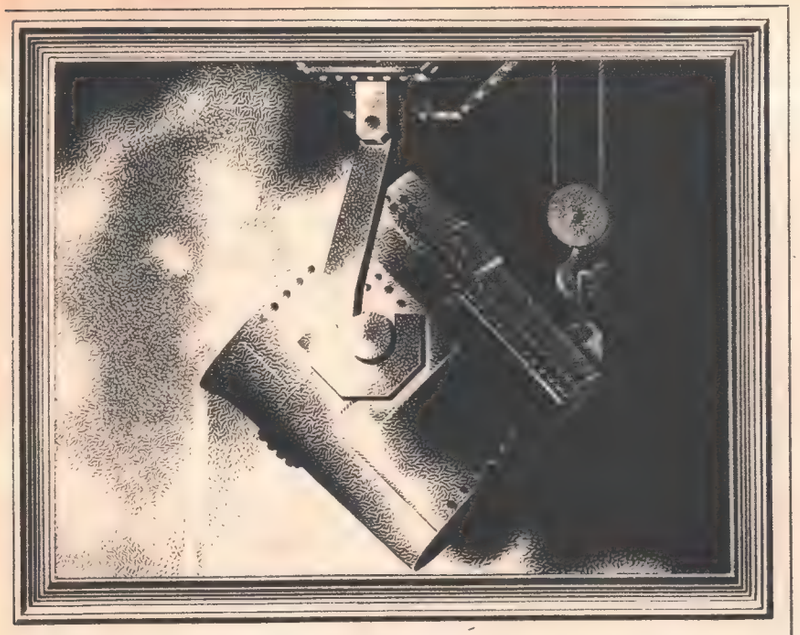
Storm Kennedy's forehead grew moist. Vividly, a phantom appeared before his mind's eye. He saw again a ghastly figure on a shadowy stair, chalky face, extended arm. He heard that croaked, accusing whisper:

"*La*. . . . It was *La*. . . ."

To be concluded next week

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of *John Bull*'s team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the *John Bull* Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.



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BRITISH IRON AND STEEL FEDERATION

THE TORY HOPEFULS

Continued from page 8

appropriate enough when Oliver was made Minister of War in 1940, the fourth Stanley to hold the post.

Like many of his front-bench colleagues Stanley went to Eton and Oxford. He fought in the first World War and at nineteen was known as "the boy major"; he was awarded the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre. After that he was a barrister, a stockbroker, and finally Member of Parliament for Westmorland.

He received his first office when he was thirty-five and like Eden was hailed as a promising young man; but the promise was slow to materialize, for during the ten years between 1931 and 1941 he held six ministerial appointments without distinction. He was moved from post to post in the hope that the next would command the talents which the previous one had failed to do. But in spite of a remarkably shrewd brain, indecisiveness undermined his ability and he himself once referred to "my many ministerial jobs in which I have led a transient and embarrassed existence."

His Diffidence Vanished

When Churchill sent him to the Colonial Office in 1942 his star began to rise, but it was not until the Conservative Party was defeated and he sat on the front bench no longer as a Minister but as a Member of the Opposition that his highly critical and cynical cast of mind found its real outlet. All at once the diffidence, the indecisiveness, the lack of conviction vanished. He attacked and he attacked hard. And because his speeches were masterpieces of wit and irony the House packed to hear them. Once, much to everyone's delight, he reminded Bevin of "the importance of being Earnest."

Stanley is extremely modest and inclined to exaggerate his limitations; he pooh-poohs the idea of ever being Prime Minister, and insists that what he would like most is to return to the Colonial Office. Although he is regarded as a progressive, there are few men more deeply Conservative. He can understand a working man supporting Socialism but he finds the middle-class intellectuals hard to forgive. And nothing annoys him more than to be referred to as an intellectual himself. "Thank heaven," he once retorted in a debate, "I have one of the lowest brows in the House, which enables me to still enjoy a good knock-down comedy."

Blunt Robert Hudson

Three more Etonians who sit on the Conservative front bench and who are certain to be returned to ministerial office if their party comes back to power are Robert Hudson, Harold Macmillan, and Oliver Lyttelton.

Hudson is big, red cheeked, and vigorous; he looks forty-three and is sixty-three. He enjoys the distinction of having been a most successful Minister of Agriculture. Before the war his Tory colleagues considered him too blunt to be safe in high office; what he lacked, they said, was tact and finesse. For this reason he cooled his heels for nine years as a junior Minister. When Churchill became Premier, however, he put Hudson in charge of shipping, then switched him a year later to deal with agriculture.

Hudson was enterprising; the country needed food and he began the unheard-of process of dispossessing glaringly inefficient farmers and transferring their holdings to those who could produce it. County and district agricultural committees were set up whereby farmers themselves were given the task of seeing that such new measures were enforced.

Hudson took up farming himself to show how it should be done, and built up a herd of Friesian cows which in 1947 topped the milk records for Britain.

Blimpish-looking Macmillan

Macmillan is an intellectual rather than a man of action. He is a grandson of the founder of Macmillan's publishing house and took first-class honours at Oxford. Pompous, dignified, with spectacles and a walrus moustache, Macmillan is so much a caricature of the English Blimp it is difficult to reconcile his appearance with the fact that in the 1930s some of his Tory colleagues regarded him as a dangerous Liberal. He wrote a book entitled *The Middle Way* which advocated many Socialist ideas.

During the war he was sent to North Africa as British Minister; after that to Italy as High Commissioner. If the Conservatives come back Macmillan might become Foreign Minister.

Oliver Lyttelton is the large, fifty-six year old, boisterous, good-natured exponent of big business. He was managing director of the British Metal Corporation at the outbreak of war; Churchill persuaded him to enter the House and invited him to run the Board of Trade. In 1942 he was made Minister of Production. Although he is a hard worker and an excellent administrator, he has never mastered the technique of debate and is seldom able to conceal the fact that he regards all those who disagree with him politically as fools.

Conservatives have the support of the upper classes, a large proportion of the middle classes, and a small proportion of the working classes. When election day comes Lord Woolton will have his goods tastefully displayed; but can he undercut the firm across the way?

If the answer is yes, the politicians on the Conservative front bench, the majority of whom began their ministerial careers under Baldwin and Chamberlain, will be dusted and taken off the shelf.

This article is another of the important chapters—exclusively published in John Bull—from American-born Virginia Cowles's study of British politics and politicians, "No Cause for Alarm" (Hamish Hamilton, 15s.).

NOW YOU KNOW

PUTTING ON AN AMATEUR dramatic show or concert party can be great fun, but there are certain legal responsibilities.

The co-operation of the local hall caretaker should be wooed at all costs, for he will have all the by-laws on public safety—fire, exits, gangways, parking—at his fingertips.

Then there is entertainment duty. Although most amateur shows are exempt from this tax, the exemption is not automatic and application must be made to the Secretary, H.M. Customs and Excise, City Gate House, London, E.C.2.

Performing rights, too, should not be ignored. To produce some plays you have to pay a performing fee—generally to the author's agent—and if copyright music is to be used a fee may also be due to the Performing Rights Society, Ltd., 33 Margaret Street, London, W.1.

Running's the least problem in cross-country. Every step may hide a pitfall, mud may bog you down, snow block out the trail and frozen ground turn an ankle

Reg Gosney leaps a ditch. At forty he runs eight miles each weekend

Cross-country is rough going

by RICHARD COLLIER

MOST CROSS-COUNTRY runners consider they have had a reasonably rewarding day if they can cover six miles of steep inclines, cart-tracks, bogs and ploughed fields in a level 39 minutes. For a runner to cover the same terrain in 31 minutes 54 seconds, which works out at a mile every 5 minutes 19 seconds—is outstanding.

Reg Gosney, a fair-haired, shy-seeming draughtsman, who is secretary of Southampton Athletic Club, did this quite comfortably just on four years ago, to beat the standard time of the Southern Counties Amateur Athletic Association. For this and other reasons, most experts consider that Gosney is a more-than-promising contender for the highlight event of the cross-country season—the English Cross-Country National, which takes place at Aylesbury next March.

Knowing Reg's past record, few runners would be likely to describe him as delicate, yet it was not until his twentieth year that Reg ever did any running at all. It happened at that time that the junior branch of the local Imperial League were arranging a sports day, and they asked Reg which races he wanted to enter.

Reg replied that he didn't think he wanted to enter for anything; as a boy he had always been much too frail for serious running ever to be possible.

"In that case," said the selectors, unfeelingly, "you'll be no good on sprinting or any of the short-distance stuff. You'd better jog around in the three-mile."

No one was more surprised than Reg when he jogged around to such good effect that he won it, and shortly after that, when chosen to represent the Wessex Federation in a race against the Rest of England, he further distinguished himself by coming fourth. Convinced of his future in the cross-country field, Reg joined the Hants Athletic Club. But as time went by he seemed to make remarkably little headway.

"Luckily for me," says Reg, "the club's trainer, Tommy Crowle, had got his eye on me, and he could see just where it was that I was going wrong. He took me off long-distance stuff altogether and got me to concentrate on the mile and half-mile, aiming all the time at building up a greater speed."

One thing that Reg quickly came to realize was that, as far as cross-country runners were concerned, stamina counted a good deal more than physique. This realization was largely influenced by the showing of Tommy Crowle himself, who shortly afterwards won a race of eighty yards at a timing of just under ten seconds. He was eighty-two at the time.

Beat Wooderson

Reg concentrated on building up his speed so whole-heartedly that by 1937 he felt ready for the rigours of the open fields again. By 1941, when he had turned thirty, Reg was firmly established as one of the cross-country stars of the day. Not only did he beat the supposedly unbeatable Tom Carter in the Southern Counties Open Five Miles at Chingford, in a subsequent race, with equal facility, he beat the famous Sidney Wooderson.

Two years later he was unbeaten throughout the season, winning not only four Southern Counties open scratch events, from five to seven and a half miles, but his club and county titles as well. Since the end of the war he has competed in four international runs, and in last year's National, at Birmingham, although handicapped by a strained cartilage, he finished fourth of a field of nearly 600 over a gruelling ten-mile course.

This year, though his eyes are still set firmly on the National title, Reg is more than ever aware that there is many a slip between the starting line and the finishing post. He says: "So many things crop up which you can never anticipate — running is really the least of your problems."

The National's ten-mile course, for instance, falls in a different area of England every year, selected in advance by officials of the English Cross-Country Union. Normally of figure-eight design, chosen to incorporate the countryside's trickiest pitfalls, it represents four laps of two and a half miles each, so that even runners living locally gain no ultimate advantage by knowing the course in advance.

Since every runner receives a diagram of the course, which is not only marked out by arrows, stakes and paper-trails, but has linesmen posted at frequent intervals, the actual business of keeping to the trail should be fairly simple.

On one occasion, however, Reg, toiling up a steep hill, saw, mistily, an arrow that seemed to indicate the general direction and set off along the trail. At the time he was lying third. Some time later he again caught sight of the runners who had been immediately preceding him—but this time they were coming straight towards him. Only then did it dawn on him that the hastily glimpsed arrow had been marking the return journey.

Once chaos ensued because a local athletics club was running a paper-chase at the same time, and the leaders of the cross-country, following the wrong paper-trail, found that they had won the paper-chase instead.

Other Sports Taboo

"A cross-country runner," Reg says, "should be lightly built, with a whipcord physique. And he should avoid other sports. Swimming, for instance, is all very well, but while a swimmer needs an elongated arm muscle, a runner needs his arm muscles bunched. Tennis is very nice, too, but it tends to bunch the thigh. A runner's thigh must be relaxed."

Each season brings innumerable contests from which a runner can choose, but only five, in Reg's estimation, are of any real significance: the County, Inter-County and Southern Counties Championships, the National and the International.

Reg rarely reckons to enter for more than four events during the whole season. His training, which is done solely at weekends, never varies: a steady two to three miles on the Saturday afternoon, a brisk five miles every Sunday morning.

Diet, which can influence the whole course of a race, is equally important. Reg doesn't drink or smoke, and he likes to keep his weight of 10 stone 3 pounds steady all the year round.

Pre-race Meal

On the morning of a race he has a boiled egg and a glass of milk four hours prior to the start—and the timing must be exact to allow for digestion. On one occasion, when the waiter, intent on serving all the runners together, kept him waiting twenty minutes, Reg refused to eat at all—"the psychological strain of wondering whether it was going to digest in time would have been too great."

The type of country covered in any race, of course, makes an enormous difference to the individual runner's prowess. Wooderson, primarily a track runner, likes the going firm and flat. Reg, on the other hand, who always trains over country, prefers it soft and hilly.

A true cross-country man, he explains, finds that a road surface jars tremendously; developing his muscles

OVER £1,000 for CHRISTMAS

Who's for the last "Bullets" fortune of 1949?

EACH of these typical JOHN BULL readers has won a £750 prize in *Bullets* this year. On the left is Mr. W. J. Fanner, of Shanklin. "I'm fifty-six," he told us, "a lifelong railwayman and a bachelor. *Bullets* being my first love, I spend most of my spare time with the competition." Centre £750 winner is senior clerk S. Morgan, a Cardiff man—and on the right you see plastering contractor A. G. Bowles, of West Molesey. Now, who's going to win the last of the giant *Bullets* cheques of 1949? A £750 prize, with twelve surprises, awaits the sender of the best *Bullet* in this week's offer of over £1,000 in cheques arriving Christmas Eve. And remember—there are 99 other Christmas Eve cheques, up to 20 £10 luxury hampers and 5,000 new prizes as well!

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See coupon below for full details.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated January 7, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,710 (or Xword 662) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

Mother Britannia
Job For 1950
In Uno's Circus
Dictator Necessity
The Old Folks
We Wait And Wait, But
Prosperous
With Her
Year In, Year Out
The Icy Blast
Won't Be Denied
He Found
Majesty Of The Law
Done With
Running No Risks

Belle Of The Ball
Like Vultures
Secretly
At Auntie's Party
Going To The Pictures

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

All Dad's..... Gift
..... "Don't ..... It!"
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EXAMPLE ..... 6d.

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EX. ..... 6d.

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B. .....

EX. ..... 6d.

B. .....

£10 HAMPER BONUSES A Giant Christmas Hamper accompanies each prize of £2 10s. or over if won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

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I agree to Rules and enclose P.O. value .....

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"Bullets" Winners 1,705

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Christmas Turkey: L. A. Smith, 35 Grant Close, Liverpool, 14:

ALACK AND ALAS AND A LAUGH—LIFE!

SECOND PRIZE, £50 plus Christmas Turkey; D. Mackay, 23 Cambridge Street, Wolverton, Bletchley: OBVIOUS TO THOUGHTFUL—THE *Price Of Rises*.

THIRD PRIZE, £25 plus Christmas Turkey: R. P. Bowers, 2 Fosse Lane, Batheaston, Bath: THE POUND IS SICK, BUT—BENEFITS FROM EMPIRE "CLUB."

OTHER AWARDS: £20: C. H. Simms, 20 Crescent Road, Tilehurst, Reading: MODERN BRITANNIA—"POOR RELATION"—INFLUENTIAL FRIEND. £15: Mrs. A. Smith, 262 Lodge Road, Winson Green, Birmingham, 18: ONE THING SHE DREADED — TILL DAUGHTER-IN-LAW'S "HELLO, MUM!" £10: M. Rice, "Bekonscot," East Street, Tollesbury: TAKES ALL OUR TIME—CONVINCING SONNY ENGINE-DRIVERS WASH! £9: Mrs. E. Race, 12 Temple Court, Halton, Leeds: FAMILY SKELETON — RETURNED WITH PADDED SHOULDERS! £8: A. T. Cross, 1 Hilltop Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester: VACANT CHAIR—FOR RETAINED OFFICIAL'S FEET! £7: S. Muschamp, Flat No. 7, Northfield Parade, Hayes: ONE THING SHE WANTED — COSTUME — COAT — HAT — HANDBAG —, £6: E. R. Peek, 48 Sandy Lane (W.), Dereham: CAUGHT A COLD—APPARENTLY, RADIO DAD "STRIPPED"!

Above 7 winners each also receives Christmas Turkey.

For 5 winners of £5 plus Turkey, and 5 of £2 10s. plus Turkey, see last week's "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

Winners of 20 further Turkeys and 100 Fowls have been notified and 3,000 "Good Shots" posted.

£100 WON OUTRIGHT XWORD 657

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Groom. 6, Ardour. 8, Penny. 9, South. 12, Goat. 13, Delay. 14, Page. DOWN: 2, Root. 3, Pound. 4, Frays. 5, Ball or Wall. 7, Short. 8, Patter. 10, Lope. 11, Sure.

£100 OUTRIGHT WINNER: M. McLaughlin, 30 Prospect Place, Preston, Lancs.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 13 entrants. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up. In addition, Winner and 1st Runners-up receive Double Christmas Feasts.

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"Signpost" Prizes for 2nd Runners-up

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 662

1. What many nagging wives do
3. Elaborate one is found in many a church
5. Refuse can be disposed of by this method
7. Lorry driver convicted of using his petrol improperly is likely to be
11. It's a common practice to tease
13. One generally runs
14. There's no harm in a workman having this when there's no work for him to do

Down Clues

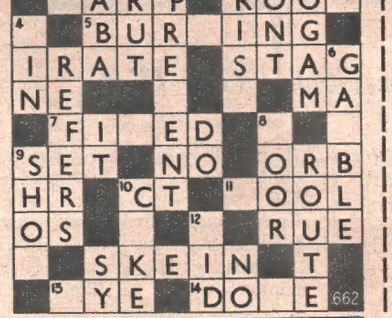
2. Certain kind of bout is sometimes exceedingly difficult to
3. A motorist may feel rather uncomfortable when taking one
4. A neighbour's this can well be offensive
6. Ministers of Crown are soon criticized if they do this
8. Shrewd blow will seldom have any effect on
9. Should be built to last
10. One rarely finds this as black as coal
12. Housewife may have to do some coaxing to get one off quickly

EXTRA CASH FOR THIS XMAS XWORD

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps, covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated December 31.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.



662

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
No.		1s.
No.		2s.

I enclose P.O. value.....

No. ..... *(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)*

Signed .....

Address .....

Puzzle and Form strictly copyright.

662 Closing Postmark MON., DEC. 12

CROSS-COUNTRY IS ROUGH GOING

Continued from previous page

over ploughed hilly land, he naturally tends to run splay-footed, picking up his feet and placing most of the weight on his heels. A track-runner, on the other hand, has developed a gliding, muscle-checking action and has also learnt to run on his toes.

Sometimes the layout of the course, combined with the weather, can create problems that a runner might never have thought possible—although it is from such circumstances, as Reg admits, that the spectators often derive most amusement.

Mud Lark

Once, at Manchester, the ground was so waterlogged that every runner on the field, in taking one particular stretch, went a header. One of the competitors was a husky character who sported a ginger beard. As he slogged up to the finishing post the crowd were entranced at the spectacle of the bottom half of his beard completely obscured by mud, while the upper half remained defiantly ginger.

It is on occasions like this that a runner's resourcefulness is tested most severely. In another race in which Reg featured, a good half of the going was thick mud, and the winner, who had had to leave both his shoes stuck fast quite early on, completed the last six and a half miles of the race barefoot.

Another runner, who left his shorts, completely ripped through, as a pennant on a barbed-wire fence, snatched a rather voluminous pair of bloomers from the washing-line of a nearby cottage, and finished the race in grand style.

Treacherous Ground

Watersplashes, although unpleasant, are less of a problem than mud—"you get waterlogged but you soon shake it out."

Frost, however, is treacherous since it can be fatally easy to turn one's ankle over ploughed fields and iron-hard cattle-tracks.

Snow is apt to be bewildering and can slow up the pace of a run considerably. One cross-country race that Reg recalls ended as a kind of crocodile, with every runner loath to forge ahead lest they should miss the trail.

Apart from an impressive collection of medals, cups and silverware—currently he has well over a hundred awards—and sundry sprains, strains and dislocations, Reg has never received anything for his running; after a particularly strenuous season, in fact, he has often found himself well out of pocket. Since he is an amateur, his club are not even allowed to pay his travelling expenses.

"But still," says Reg, "it's a bit late to worry about that now. I'm the oldest international still on the trot, and it's worth having run thousands of miles to get that far."

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Here comes Christmas

WITH RECIPES FOR FESTIVE FARE

Here are kitchen-tested recipes to help you provide the traditional fare. Though not extravagant, they give results that the family will certainly vote truly Christmassy.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING

This pudding needs no eggs ; you'll find it will turn out a good, rich tasting pudding without them. The quantities given serve four.

4 oz. plain flour, ¼ level teaspoon salt, ½ level teaspoon grated nutmeg, ¼ level teaspoon cinnamon, 1 level teaspoon mixed spice, 4 oz. sugar, 1 lb. mixed dried fruit, 4 oz. mixed peel, finely chopped, 4 oz. breadcrumbs, 4 oz. suet or fat, 1 level tablespoon treacle, ½ level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda, ¼ pint cold tea, or ale or stout.

Sift the flour, salt and spices together. Add the sugar, fruit, peel, breadcrumbs, treacle and grated suet or melted fat. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in the liquid and pour into the other ingredients ; mix well. Turn into a greased basin (2 pint size), cover with greased paper and steam for 5-6 hours. Remove the paper cover with a fresh piece and a clean cloth, and store in a cool place. Steam 1-1½ hours before serving.

CHRISTMAS CAKE

4 oz. margarine, 3 oz. sugar, 3 level tablespoons warmed black treacle or syrup, 8 oz. plain flour, ½ level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda, pinch of salt, 1 level teaspoon mixed spice, 1 level teaspoon cinnamon, 2 eggs, well beaten, 1 lb. mixed dried fruit, 3 tablespoons cold tea.

Cream the margarine and sugar together and beat in the treacle or syrup. Sift the flour, soda, salt and spices together and add alternately with the eggs to the creamed mixture. Add the fruit and mix in the tea. Turn the mixture into a 7 in. tin, lined with greased paper, and bake in a very moderate oven for 2½ hours.

SPECIAL TIP. *If adding rum or sherry to the cake, it gives the best flavour if poured over the base of the cake after it is cooked and allowed to become cold.*

Mock Almond Paste

2 oz. margarine, 2 oz. sugar, 1-2 teaspoons almond essence, 8 oz. plain cake crumbs.

Cream the margarine and sugar until light, add the essence and beat again. Mix in the cake crumbs and knead the mixture together. Roll out and use as required.

White Icing *needing no egg white*

½ level teaspoon gelatine, 2 tablespoons boiling water, 8 oz. icing sugar, a few drops of lemon juice.

Dissolve the gelatine in the water and allow to cool until almost set. Sift the icing sugar into a bowl, add the gelatine mixture and lemon juice and beat well with a wooden spoon. This consistency is right for spreading on top of the cake, but if wanted for piped decoration, then use 10 oz. sugar.

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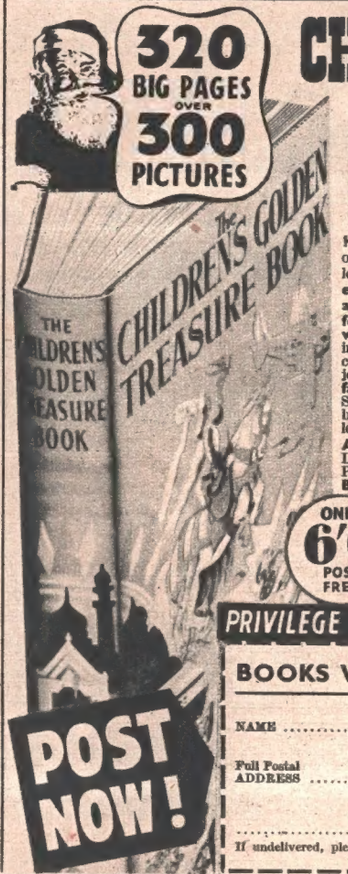

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